Bubba Henry

Jack R Ernest

Copyright

Copyright © January 2018 by Jack R Ernest

All rights reserved. This book or any portion thereof may not be reproduced or used in any manner whatsoever without the express written permission of the publisher except for the use of brief quotations in a book review or scholarly journal.

First Printing: January 2018

IBSN: 978-0-244-66358-2

1

Saw Summer Sunsets

Walking all the day near tall towers where falcons build their nests.
Silver winged they fly, they know the call of freedom in their breasts.
Soar Black Head against the sky between the rocks that run down to the sea.

"Bubba Henry is my friend; he is my brother. He only trusts those he knows," said Sean. "If he doesn't know you he won't trust you."

"Where did you get him from?" asked Katie.

"I adopted him from the local animal charity."

"And why did you pick him?"

"I didn't choose Henry; Henry chose me. Henry was abandoned by his previous owners. I guess I felt sorry for him. All he wanted was a place he could call his home. All he wanted was someone to care for him and to be there for him. I didn't just change his life; he changed mine."

They sat on the couch overlooking the mighty Atlantic Ocean. The sun was young in the day and slowly rising. It had just pierced the stale cloudy skies. Sean was a young man. He was handsome looking but had no interest in the sexual side of things. He was more interested in his own freedom. He was the kind of man that appreciated waking up every day. Katie was an American tourist who was visiting Ireland. She was staying at his house for a few days. She was an attractive young woman with purple hair that was tied back in a bun. She had always wanted to see Ireland and had read so much about it. She had just arrived by taxi from Shannon airport to Kinvara Co. Galway where Sean lived. She was enthusiastic about seeing Ireland for the first time. She had dreamed of travelling around Ireland meeting people and exploring the rich land.

"So what do you do for a living?" enquired Katie.

"I am a writer," responded Sean.

"What kind?"

"A failed kind," said Sean laughing.

“How do you mean?” asked Katie.

“I am joking. I didn’t mean failure in the sense of that I haven’t made a living from writing. I meant it in the sense that I have failed at everything else except writing.”

“You have failed at life?”

“Yes. Writing is my refuge. It is my salvation. Solitude is my wife and writing is my mistress. I am lonely and that’s all I am qualified to be. I have nothing to offer the world except my own failure. I am an artist only because I don’t know what I am.”

“You don’t seem too sad about it.”

“I used be. I used wallow in self-pity over my failures. But then I realized how fortunate I am to be alive in this world. I am bipolar, ocd, gad and schizoid. I have poor hearing and poor eyesight. I have scars all over my body. But yet I am the happiest man in Kinvara because I appreciate just how fortunate I am to be alive in this savage universe.”

“Wow that is a different mentality to have.”

“I could be unhappy over my illnesses and die without ever being happy. Or I could just accept myself for who I am and try to enjoy my life.”

“Do you live alone?”

“Just myself and Henry.”

“Do you not get bored?”

“I have learned to tolerate my boredom. I have learned to tolerate my solitude. In solitude I am everything; without solitude I am nothing.”

“Would you not like to get married?”

“Either I get married or I become a writer, but either way I fail. I am one of life’s failures and that is why I have succeeded. My failure is my success; my success is my failure.”

“You remind me of one of these artists, like Vincent Van Gogh or Franz Kafka, I hope you don’t mind me saying.”

“Not at all. It is an honour to be referenced to them.”

“I wonder do you know that Van Gogh never sold a painting in his life and Kafka burned ninety percent of his books?”

“Both were troubled geniuses. Both were intensely afraid of being famous I would guess.”

“Afraid of fame?”

“Yes, it is very common. Fame is a potent venom. I too am petrified of being famous. Some writers have committed suicide not over their failure but because they succeeded. Fame corrupts even the most innocent of men. One suffers to be famous; it makes you paranoid. Being a genius is always a mistake. I just want to be forgotten when I die. In some ways I am lucky I have failed.”

“But fame is good, is it not?”

“In some ways, it is; in some ways, it isn’t. From my own point of view, I enjoy being anonymous. I get pleasure out of being unknown. I would hate to be plastered all over the papers and what not. I don’t know which I fear more, being famous or being a failure; both are failures in a way. When I publish a new book, I pray to god it will be a failure. Failure I can handle. I’ve been a failure all my life. Success is something new, something toxic. Often it is the actual failure. I don’t want to be successful; I just want to be unknown. I wish I could be unknown by all the people who know me. I have a compulsion to write and it is an obsession that will likely drive me to suicide. I just want to be forgotten. I just want to melt into the icy universe. I just want the indifference to shatter me.”

“Why is that may I ask?”

“Fame corrupts even the best of men. I wouldn’t wish it on my worst enemies. We shame the criminals. We label them negatively. But we also label the famous in life and to be labelled is to be known and to be known is to be condemned. Fame is a slow form of suicide. I have pretty much signed my own death warrant by becoming a writer.”

“So, what, are you an anonymous writer?”

“Yes, I have a pen name which I use.”

“And no one knows who you actually are?”

“Not yet anyhow. But things can change. I am dreading dying because then my identity will be released. Sometimes the real world is unbearable. Shame maybe. So, you invent another world to escape into.”

“But if you haven’t committed any crimes you have nothing to fear?”

“True, but they will still mock you however. They will still study you and demean you. To be famous is a crime just like murder. Sometimes it is better to be zero than it is to be a hero.”

“But you are not a criminal?”

“Writing is my crime and the pen is my weapon.”

Katie laughed at this assertion.

“Anyhow you will be showing me around the west of Ireland for the next few weeks, so I hope you are not a criminal. What should I call you?”

“You can call me Sean?”

“Is that your real name?”

“Yes.”

“Sean and Henry. So how long have you had him as a dog?”

“About four years now. He’s my best friend.”

“He has very long ears.”

“All Cocker Spaniels have long ears. They were artificially bred that way.”

“He looks so cute. Why are the ears so long?”

“I think it’s because they help funnel scents to his nose. He loves smelling things.”

“Do you walk him?”

“Yes, three times a day. He takes ages to walk though because he keeps stopping to smell different things. Every signpost, every bush and every lamppost must be inspected by Henry.”

“God he’s so cute.”

“I get that a lot off people. He’s a bit of a babe magnet. He’s very popular with the women.”

“I’m sure he is. How old is he.”

“I got him when he was about two years old.”

“Off the animal charity?”

“Yes. The Galway Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.”

“Was he there since he was a puppy?”

“No no, he was rescued from a bad situation by them.”

“Oh, what happened.”

“Well he was neglected by his previous owners. I think the wife of the previous owner died and neglected him. Didn’t feed him or look after him and so the charity took him in.”

“God that’s terrible.”

“Yea there were maggots in his ears. His ears get very sore from time to time.”

“God that’s awful. The maggots were eating the inside of his ears.”

“Yea pretty much. But he’s grand now. I just have to clean his ears every day. He doesn’t wallow in self-pity. He is happy to be alive and loved. That’s all he wants, to be loved.”

“Henry must be one of the fortunate ones. How many dogs across the world are starving?”

“It’s awful to think of it alright. How many dogs are killed for meat in East Asia.”

“I know it’s so cruel. It’s one of the reasons why I will never visit Thailand and places like that. A friend said that Bangkok is full of stray starving dogs.”

“It would break my heart to see them. It really would.”

“You are a dog lover like myself then.”

“Oh yea. My best friend in this world is Henry or Bubba Henry as I call him. Do you own dogs yourself?”

“No, I wish I could but my job prevents me from doing so.”

“Oh, what do you work as?”

There was a slight pause.

“I am kind of in the discipline of providing a service to men.”

“Oh right, what kind of service?”

“Well, let’s say a provocative service if you know what I mean?”

Sean was slightly confused.

“I am a sex worker, is what I am trying to say,” Katie said confidently.

Sean was slightly puzzled and did not know what to say.

“Well that’s an unusual choice of work,” he said smiling. “You know one of the most intelligent persons I have ever met was a prostitute or sex worker?”

“In what way?”

“She wasn’t stuck in a nine-to-five job. She wasn’t under pressure to conform to the principles of society. I once asked her what was it like spending Christmas alone? She replied that she was not alone because solitude was a great companion. A bit like Henry David Thoreau said: “I have never met a companion as companionable as solitude.””

“There is an element of freedom to it and you make a lot of money.”

“I won’t judge. My father would. But I won’t. As long as you are happy is the main thing.”

“Used you visit this escort?”

“Pardon?”

“Used you pay her for her services?”

“No, no. I was chatting to her on the internet. I have no interest in the sexual side of things in life. I am a bit of a sexual anorexic.”

“A sexual anorexic! What’s that?”

“It’s someone who is repulsed by sex so much that they generally avoid it.”

“Wow, you don’t see that too often in my line of work?”

“Well I would imagine they are sexual addicts?”

“Some of them are. But some are just lonely and looking for company.”

“I’m the opposite then. I love the loneliness. I love being by myself. Only in solitude can you be truly free.”

“Well I think it depends on the persons own conviction. Some like being in love and some like you like being alone.”

“Each to their own I suppose. Do you make a lot of money in your line of work?”

“It depends how you perceive “a lot.” I make enough to keep me happy, and survive and of course go on holidays like I am doing now.”

There was a slight silence.

“You mentioned that you are OCD and bipolar. How do they affect you, if you don’t mind me asking?” asked Katie.

“I don’t mind. I take medication for the bipolar, so you wouldn’t notice it. But if I stopped taking my meds I would probably get manic and put into hospital. Either that or depression. The OCD is actually more damaging. I have a rare form of OCD called Pure Obsessional OCD. What that basically means is I get bad images or bad urges of doing something in my head and I have to repeat phrases to neutralize the bad thoughts.”

“How do you mean bad thoughts?”

“Well I get thoughts of harming people all the time.”

“But you would never act on those thoughts, would you?”

“No. Like I said I repeat phrases in my mind to distract myself. It’s a weird disease.”

“You know I once heard about OCD that it is not so much an anxiety disorder. It is actually that the brain is wired differently than those who do not suffer from it.”

“Yea, Freud once said that if intelligent life were to visit from a different planet, they would understand depression or bipolar or schizophrenia. They would not be able to comprehend OCD. It is the most bizarre of psychiatric illnesses. On the plus it means I am a perfectionist and extremely punctual.”

“Like a German.”

“Most definitely.”

“A close relative of mine suffers from Paranoid Schizophrenia. Once she takes her medication she is all right, although the tablets knock her out.”

“From an existential point of view schizophrenia is the most interesting disease. Why people suffer from it is extremely intriguing. A famous psychiatrist RD Laing said the root cause of it is the family.”

“The family!”

“Yes, the family. The fulcrum of schizophrenia in his view was the pressure of being known, in particular by friends and family. To be known puts us under unconscious psychological stress, the result being schizophrenia.”

“Very interesting. You seem to know a lot about psychology?”

“Ah well I read a lot in my spare time.”

There was a momentary silence.

“And what made you choose Ireland?” asked Sean of her.

“Ah Ireland. I had heard so much about it from friends. They all said the people were nice and it was a great small country to see beautiful things.”

“And what counties are you planning on visiting?”

“I am hoping to do the west coast and then the east coast and to see all the major cities.”

“So, Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Galway.”

“Yes pretty much and I may take a trip to Belfast as well.”

“Well you picked the right time to come. Its summer time now and it is warm for travelling. It still rains though.”

“Would it have been too cold in the winter?”

“It’s not too bad. But lots of rain, especially here in Galway.”

“How big is Galway?”

“It’s the second biggest county in Ireland after Cork. Dublin then is the biggest city but a small county.”

“At least with Ireland being small you can easily visit all the different areas.”

“Ah yea, it would only take you two hours to drive to Dublin from here. About the same length of time to get to cork from here as well.”

“I look forward to my holiday.”

“Was the flight ok.”

“Oh yes. I flew from JFK to Heathrow and from there to Shannon. It took about eight hours in total.”

“How long are you staying for?”

“About a month. I hope to do a lot of travelling by car.”

“And where in America are you from?”

“I’m from Yonkers in New York.”

“A lot of Irish live there don’t they?”

“Yes. How did you know?”

“I have relatives that live in Woodlawn the Bronx.”

“That’s very close. I may have passed by them on the street without realizing it.”

“It’s a small world.”

They both laughed.

“I presume you are fond of travelling?” enquired Sean

“Most certainly. I work hard for a few months. Save up the money and go off to all corners of the world. I love travelling and seeing all the different cultures. What about yourself?”

“I haven’t been on holidays in years. I have to mind Henry. I just wake up, take the dog for a walk, write, watch TV and go to bed. And I do that every day.”

“The simple life.”

“Definitely.”

“As long as you enjoy yourself, that’s what matters.”

“I have money to spend if I wanted to travel, but mostly I just give it to animal charities.”

“That’s nice of you.”

“Thank you. So what’s your plan now that you are in Ireland?”

“Travel, travel, travel.”

“All over Ireland.”

“Yes. I was hoping someone would give me a tour.”

“Well I could do that if you want? I could take you across Galway, Clare and Limerick?”

“Are they close to each other?”

“Yes, they are an archipelago of counties in the mid-west of Ireland.”

“Yes, that would be very kind of you. What about Henry though?”

“He can come with us.”

“That would be great.”

The New Species

Diary: Day 28

Bubba Henry is my friend; he is my brother. As we walk through the degenerate landscape he is my only will to live. All has changed, changed utterly; a terrible beauty is born. Where once there were green fields and blue oceans now there is a disease. Man has been purged. Only those who managed to escape remain free. But they will die of starvation soon enough. Many turned to eating their pets to stay alive but that was only delaying the inevitable. Man was doomed. His time was coming to a close. The New Species as they were called had attacked and taken over the planet and had become the most dominant species of the land. With this alteration of order came wave after wave of hurt and pain for mankind. Suddenly he found himself inferior and weak. Suddenly he was inflicted with all the pain that he had inflicted on the four-legged animals. But the New Species was smart though. Instead of wiping out human kind they decided to use them as fuel just like man had done with the chickens and the cows. The New Species rounded up men, women and children into camps and instigated a system of breeding. Men, women and children were then slaughtered violently to feed the New Species. The lucky people were used as operatives for various reasons. They were forced to clean the roads or work in the breeding factories. They suffered but managed to survive and were not catastrophically tortured like so many unfortunate others. Some managed to escape the rounding up and fled into the bleak countryside and foraged for survival. But they were facing a battle. They had little food and no shelter. They could not light fires or else they would alert the New Species. Many succumbed to starvation or hypothermia. Such a cruel end. Many committed suicide in the face of such deprivation. They were realistic and saw so much pain down the road that the only viable option was to shoot oneself in the head. Anyhow, the human population of nearly eight billion people was decimated and replaced with a more intelligent species who now presided over the planet.

The New Species were spawned from an experiment. Genetic Scientists in America were toying with the DNA of human beings in an effort to create a man who was resistant to the various diseases such as schizophrenia, HIV and cancer. So they proceeded to take out one chromosome of DNA and replace it with another and then they would test this on mice to see if they were immune to the different maladies that were so common with man. After playing around with the mice, they finally genetically modified an animal that was extremely

resistant to illness. These mice were stronger, faster, healthier and above all else much more intelligent than other mice. One quality they noticed with these modified mice was that when they were placed in a secluded area with normal mice, they proceeded to attack and kill the normal mice. This intrigued the scientists as they wondered what they had created. Then the next step was to up the ante so to speak. So dogs and cats were genetically recombined and the pattern repeated itself. The offspring with the modified genes were unique and displayed the qualities previously mentioned.

But the scientists decided that to reintroduce the genes to humans could be risk adverse and thus decided against performing this experiment on human kind. They did however make one huge blunder and that was they published their results. What happened then was one man got it into his head that it would be funny to see the outcome of this trial if it was introduced on humans. So, he set about forming his own research institute with his own scientists and under orders they would carry out the unethical manipulation of the human chromosome. This took place in China where it was allowed because it was classified as a benefit to the economy. The laws were not as stringent in this part of the world such was the desire to gain an advantage over their American counterparts. So years passed by without much success. Genetically modified humans were bred but died soon after birth but the Chinese were adamant that it would work and thus pumped more and more money into the scheme. Eventually the operation grew into a massive system employing close to two thousand people. They worked day and night to formulate a new species that was super-human. Despite the protestations of the UN council and the accusations from American Scientists in particular, the scheme remained intact.

Eventually they made a breakthrough. They created a human that lived for longer than twenty-four hours. They then built upon this achievement by spawning a New Species Human that lived for a week. They then engineered the species to grow at an extremely fast rate. Where it takes maybe eighteen years for a child to become a man with humans, this engineered New Species was able to reach full maturity within six months. They then with a rush of blood to the head produced more New Species Humans. These then matured into adults and in turn produced even more of this bewildering species. Their method of reproduction differed from that of humans. Whereas humans like all most animals engaged in sexual penetration to give birth to offspring, the New Species did no such thing. You see the New Species were hermaphrodites that

did not need two people to engage in sexual activity to produce offspring. No every individual of the New Species could rear a next of kin without the assistance of another person. This method of reproduction was enshrined in their genetic composition which the scientists had engineered.

They were observed and analysed day after day. Armed guards patrolled the area and the New Species were enclosed in a steel pen from which there was no escape, at least not now. Eventually however they had reproduced so much that a larger facility was needed to cope with the demand of these genetic migrants. The Chinese did two things. One, they built a larger factory to cope with the demand and two, they exterminated or controlled the population of the New Species using chemical means. The New Species however were smart and disliked this culling of their fellow species and made their feelings known through causing havoc in the two facilities. The Chinese then responded through violent means. They eradicated large numbers of the New Species or tortured them in front of their companions, again using chemical means. Such a method was to precipitate the mutiny that would condemn mankind.

There were conflicting reports of how they escaped the holding camp. One report said they impersonated humans and walked out. Other reports attested that they launched an attack and fought their way out to freedom. Other reports then suggested that they had received help from humans. Either way the means was irrelevant once they tasted freedom. From thereon in mankind was condemned. The New Species were engineered to thrive and to conquer. They could survive without food and water for months. They could live in the intense heat or the turgid cold. They could hold their breath under water for hours. Man was nothing compared to them physiologically. If it were a straight battle between the New Species and man, man would lose every time. True to form it was tragedy that had given birth to change. When the Chinese learned of the escape they immediately euthanized the remaining imprisoned New Species. But it was too late. They were alive and free and it was the beginning of the end for mankind.

The New Species could speak fluently in Chinese. They had picked it up after two weeks from hearing the guards talk amongst each other. It was another demonstration of just how intelligent these ultra-humans were. They quickly learned how to negotiate life in this pen-house. They learned that if they misbehaved they would get electrocuted. They discovered how to charm the guards through language. They were in one word sophisticated beyond any

other animal including human beings. When they were given books, they read them furiously. They were studying the scientists as much as the scientists were studying them. What they were in fact doing was learning about their enemy, so that when the time came to launch an attack they would be prepared. As a result of the exterminations they learned quickly that it was better to be quiet and unassuming than to play with fire. In the tranquillity they increased their numbers rapidly and began plotting the chance to turn on their cruel masters.

Among the attributes that the New Species were enamoured with was a thick Kevlar like skin. Unlike human skin which is weak and easily penetrated by fast moving projectiles, the New Species skin was reinforced, tough and could withstand bullets and sharp knives. This was one of the defining points that led to the uprising and eventually man's defeat. When war broke out the guns were useless as were the knives. Man couldn't even use napalm to burn the New Species because they were also resistant to immense heat. Much higher heat, such as that in a fusion bomb, was needed to kill them. The only way they could actually kill them, man to man, was to chemically poison or electrocute them in a confined space and that was impossible once they escaped their penitentiary. This is how the Chinese scientists controlled the New Species population within the confines of the jail. They poisoned them. To bring obedience they electrocuted them; to bring down their rapidly growing population they gassed them with cyanide.

Another physical attribute that they possessed was the ability to see in infrared light. This played a crucial role in the uprising as they were able to see when the guards weren't present. Essentially, they could see behind the thick walls what humans were there and what exactly they were doing. This gave to them a supreme advantage over human beings and when the war started they were ahead of mankind with their level of expertise. When it came to stealth warfare, the New Species were able to ambush soldiers with ease due to their infrared mechanism. The masses of men tried to retaliate but it was all in vain. It was a war they could not win. Another trait that greatly helped them during the battle was their ability to camouflage themselves into their environment like a chameleon. This along with their infrared skillset enabled them to engage in guerrilla warfare. Not even the most sophisticated soldiers of the American or Russian battalions could match them.

Although the men vastly outnumbered the New Species, they were at a serious disadvantage skill wise. When the war broke out and the New Species took up

arms to take the fight to their inferior so-called masters. The Chinese initially were obnoxiously confident that they could defeat the New Species in a couple of days. So, they sent their men in with guns and only in the heat of battle did they realize the monster they had created. The guns were useless against the Kevlar like skin of the New Species. Then they tried the flamethrowers and the bombs and they too were ineffective. They then turned to gas warfare and were prepared to kill their own people to eliminate this menace. The gaseous attack did work to an extent but was limited in its effectiveness. Given that the battles were taking place in the wide-open areas of the Chinese country side, any chemical missiles that were fired were only useful in small patches. They did manage to kill many of the New Species but such was the rate of reproduction of this animal that new members were being birthed more than they were being killed. Eventually the Americans and the Russians were brought in to fix the situation and initially they made great advances in stopping the New Species multiplying. But even they knew that they could only be one hundred percent successful if every single member of the New Species was wiped out.

Initially the coalition of Chinese, American and Russian intelligence controlled the situation very well. When a battle raged they would use chemical means to kill the New Species. However, they underestimated the intelligence of this species. One must remember that these engineered animals possessed the intelligence of humans. The New Species realizing that they were being obliterated to the point of extinction adapted their tactics to tilt the war in their favour. Instead of meeting man head on in the ground, they would attack in the shadows of darkness. They adopted guerrilla style methods and would ambush man when he was least expecting it. Initially the attacks were sparse and irrelevant. But slowly they began to add up to huge numbers of casualties for human kind. When the New Species wasn't attacking army personnel they would attack the innocent Chinese civilians and slaughter them mercilessly. Slowly the battle tilted in the favour of the New Species. Slowly the coalition of American, Russian and Chinese soldiers was being eroded.

Of course, the New Species was a derivative of man and thus needed a fuel to keep him going. Whilst in the pen-house they were fed the same diet as humans and responded well to it. They like mankind were omnivores. They could eat meat and vegetables. However, as the war progressed in East Asia and they began to dominate proceedings they exhausted their supply of farmed meat such as beef or chicken. Eventually both sides were running on empty stomachs. But

the New Species made an ingenious discovery in that they found they had a taste for human flesh and in particular they enjoyed its flavour. It came to pass that instead of just killing members of the coalition, they would kill them and move their dead bodies to a secure location, where they would freeze them and then when the time came for a meal, they would butcher and cook various parts of the soldier's body. In particular they found meat from the thigh region very tasty. The heart was another delicacy that was highly appreciated. Alas the reverse was not true. Human kind would not eat the New Species. They were paranoid that they would contract a disease or at worst turn into one of the New Species. When a New Species soldier was killed, he was dumped in a pita and left to rot.

Henry's Story

Bubba Henry is my brother; he is my friend. They were tightly cramped into the steel cages. They could barely breathe let alone move. Many died on route to the abattoir. They suffocated due to the lack of space. There were as many as seven dogs confined to one cage. They were tightly compressed. There was no concern shown for their welfare. The Chinese workers didn't care about these poor animals. They were only after the money. The Chinese government was also deaf towards the plight of the dogs. They were seen as economic commodities and the people of Yulin needed to be fed. There were estimates that nearly ten million dogs were slaughtered each year in China to fuel their appetite. Many of these dogs were stolen pets. Their owners would let them outside for a run around and they would be abducted by gangs specifically looking for dogs to take. Their owners would never see their pets again and could only imagine the pain and suffering that they would go through.

They stared at the landscape in their cages. The cold pierced their skin as the truck carrying about fifty cages drove through the country side of Southern China. It was night time. Many dogs froze to death on the journey and died. They along with the suffocated were the lucky ones. They were spared the agony of the extreme barbaric torture that was inflicted on those that made it to the butcher's shop. Their eyes were so sad as they looked out. They wondered why man was so cruel to do such things to them. After all the unconditional love they had bequeathed to their owners, now they were tightly confined in horrible conditions. Their faces said it all. They were thirsty and starving and yet no one would listen to them or empathize with them. Many defecated and urinated in their cages. The smell was rancid. The conditions were deplorable for these poor harmless dogs. If only they knew what awaited them, then maybe they would gang together and attack their cruel masters.

There was all types and sizes of dogs. From Rottweilers to Yorkshire Terriers. Regardless of their breed or age or condition they were thrown into the cages and were tightly compressed. The pressure weighed on their heavy lungs. They could not move or breathe. They could not escape. They were destined for the meat market of some Chinese shop. If only they knew. If only they had the strength to fight back. Some barked and yearned for a change of conditions but they were ignored. Their eyes were full of tears. Life was good initially. They were loved by their owners. They were fed, and looked after and had a warm place to sleep. Now they were consumed with hunger and thirst. They pondered

what had gone wrong. Why had man suddenly changed? The truck moved on, as did time. It did not care about these animals and neither did the Chinese.

The truck grounded to a halt as they came to the abattoir. For those who had survived, now it would get much worst. The cages of dogs were thrown from the truck onto the wet concrete ground. Some dogs broke bones when they landed and some were concussed such was the force. They howled and barked and pleaded for mercy but none was forthcoming. The smell was rancid. The Chinese men talked in the background. They were preparing the tools for use. They had metal bars and blow torches. The screams of dogs could be heard resonating in the factory. The dogs in the cages could but only listen and tolerate. They didn't know what was coming and that was the terror of it.

Dogs were considered a delicacy in Southern China. Man's best friend was eaten in large quantities by the hungry stomachs of East Asia. Millions were captured as stolen pets and transported to these barbaric factories where they were slaughtered so inhumanely it was known that western people who observed the atrocities would get sick. The western man could not comprehend why they were so cruel to these poor dogs. The western man valued dogs so highly. They were man's best friend. They were loyal and obedient. They brought so much joy to people's lives that to see them treated as a piece of meat or a commodity was a blow to the senses. They were shocked at how little empathy the Chinese displayed towards these harmless canines. They could butcher or torture them alive for hours without any hint of emotion. It was like the Chinese were a different species to the western man. It was like they were not human at all such was the brutality of what they did to these dog's day after day and night after night.

They unloaded all the cages and transported them to a bigger cage where the dogs would stay. This was a temporary respite from the pain for the dogs. They were able to move around in this steel bar cage that was about the size of a room. But this was as good as it would get for these timid dogs. One by one they would be seized around the neck with a pincer like apparatus and taken out and then clubbed on the head, have their throat slit and were then burned whilst still semi-conscious. This torture was generally considered the humane method by the Chinese. Some other men were less cordial with regards the welfare of these dogs. Some men would tie the fearful dog's legs together and his front paws and then would burn him while he was fully conscious. That was a pain that was beyond what one could imagine. Some other unfortunate dogs were

simply thrown into a boiling barrel of water and boiled alive until their skin slipped off. Much worst even still was that some dogs were hanged upwards off the bloody floor and skinned alive. This was all done because the Chinese public who ate dog meat believed that the meat was tastier when the poor defenceless animal suffered. They would try to inflict as much pain as possible on the animal. The western man could not understand such lack of compassion but to the Chinese men and women who conducted the ritualistic slaughter, this was their everyday job. They became acclimatized to the barbaric nature of it, so much that it no longer had an effect on them.

The dogs moved around in the larger enclosure. They were now able to roam freely but were still starving and thirsty and no food nor drink was provided. They looked out of the cages and they saw these evil men joking and smiling. They wondered how they could be so cruel and lack such compassion. You could see the tears in their eyes. Some of these dogs had never known love. The dogs would look at each other in the cage. It was only a matter of time before they were picked to be slaughtered. They prayed for someone to come and rescue them. They prayed for their previous owners who were kind to them to return and free them of this plight, but nothing happened. They were condemned to suffer purely because mankind was hungry. They could hear the screaming and the cries from the dogs in the abattoir. They got frightened when they thought of their own fate. The floor was laced with red blood. The stains were everywhere. The dim lights flickered on and off. They wondered if their owners were looking for them or had they simply forgotten and moved on? This was such a horrible fate for these dogs who wanted nothing but to be loved by humans. Many of them had gone from a life of privilege to a life of destitute and they couldn't understand what they had done wrong. Why did humans suddenly turn on them? What mistake had they made they pondered. They could but only lie on the wet concrete floor and wait for when they were chosen for this barbaric exercise. Where was the compassion in humans? Where was it?

2

Saw Summer Sunsets

Talking all the day with true friends, who try to make you stay.
Telling jokes and news, singing songs to pass the night away.
Watched the Galway salmon run, like silver dancing darting in the sun.

"This is a lovely view of the Atlantic," said Katie.

"Galway has some lovely spots. You can go north to Cliften and Connemara or down south to the city and Kinvara. When I was young my mother used take us to Traught Beach in Kinvara. I remember the pale sand and all the Jellyfish that were washed ashore."

"Have you ever been to Connemara?"

"Once or twice only. My sister was in the Irish summer school and we went to visit her. It's a very long journey and the roads are bad."

"Irish summer school! What is that?"

"Oh, it's where parents send their children to learn Irish during the summer months when they are off school."

"And they don't know any Irish already?"

"That's the thing about Ireland. We speak English as our main language. I don't even know any Irish myself," said Sean laughing. "Well I know some. For example, "craic" is Irish slang for fun. If someone asks you: "Any craic?" they mean do you have any news or fun news."

"Craic, as in c-r-a-c-k?"

"No c-r-a-i-c. Its Irish."

""Smithereens," is another word. You might have heard of that?"

"Oh yea, everyone knows what that means. That's famous but I didn't know it was Irish."

""Tiocfaidh Ár Lá," is a nationalist saying which means "Our day will come." It is an IRA saying about gaining a full republic."

“I was wondering alright what is the deal with Northern Ireland? Is it part of Ireland.”

“You have the Republic of Ireland, which is where we are and then you have Northern Ireland which is part of the United Kingdom.”

“Shouldn’t it really be part of the republic though.”

“It should in theory. But just like in the Middle East there are problems between the Catholics who want a united Ireland and the Protestants who want to remain part of the UK.”

“So it’s like Sunni and Shia?”

“Pretty much. Maybe not as bad now as the Arabic countries, but it was pretty bad during the seventies.”

“Why what happened?”

“Well you had people being killed by both sides in a tit-for-tat warfare. The IRA which was a republican terrorist organization would kill some Protestants and the UVF which was a Protestant terrorist organization would retaliate and kill a few Catholics. And this kept going on for years and years.”

“But it’s ok now?”

“Oh yea. It’s all calmed down now. Although you hear of an odd bit of violence with regards religion, it has become safer. Belfast is supposed to be a lovely city now, even though I have never visited.”

“Why can’t we all just get along?”

“I ask myself that alright. I don’t think we realize we are living on a planet in a dark dark universe. We are so consumed by life that the universe is ignored.”

“That’s a unique point of view to have. I have never thought like that.”

“We forget we are animals that can speak or maybe we just don’t realize we are animals that can speak.”

“God, religion is the source of so much violence and it’s supposed to be peaceful. So are you catholic or protestant?”

“I’m a Buddhist,” said Sean laughing.

“A Buddhist! That’s interesting.”

“I grew up a catholic but I changed to atheism first and then to Buddhism.”

“And why?”

“Well Buddhism is more than a religion. It’s almost a psychology on how to be happy. The Dalai Lama is a Buddhist and has a great philosophy. He teaches that the means to be happy in this world is to be so grateful for being alive rather than being an addict.”

“How do you mean an addict?”

“People need to be gratified, every second of every day. Men and women want to feel good about themselves and thus become slaves to gratification. So men have sex or watch a sports match and these serve to make him feel good. Then a woman let’s say buys a new dress that makes her look more attractive and this makes her happy. Then she maybe watches a film and this too makes her feel good.”

“So, everything in life is just an avenue to feel good, to be gratified.”

“Exactly. For example, you have come on holidays now to Ireland and through visiting the different counties and various sites you will feel good. You will feel gratified.”

“So, what’s the alternative?”

“The anti-dote to gratification is gratitude. It is to wake up every day grateful for being able to wake up every day in this universe where life and reason are seldom found together. I don’t think people realize just how fortunate they are to be alive in this universe.”

“Life becomes too material in a sense.”

“Exactly. It becomes about finding love and working this esteemed career. It becomes about having the latest technology or dressing a particular way to gain endorsement. The reality that we are so lucky to be alive in the first place is lost on us. As the Dalai Lama said: “*This is my simple religion. There is no need for temples; no need for complicated philosophy. Our own brain, our own heart is our temple; the philosophy is kindness.*””

“I must admit that is a very interesting way to perceive life. I myself would fall under the gratification bracket. I buy a new dress or I meet people purely to entertain myself and to pass the time.”

“The true enemy in life is boredom.”

“As in we cannot tolerate it?”

“Yes. Everything we do is to avoid boredom. So what religion are you?”

“I am an atheist.”

“I was one of them for a while. So, were you always an atheist?”

“I was baptised an evangelical and grew up as one. But eventually you see the world and you see all the suffering and you wonder where god is in all this.”

“Then you add into the equation that you have so many different religions, all with their own gods and you ask why is one religion above all the others.”

“It’s all bullshit and it’s just a question of what bullshit you believe,” said Katie laughing.

“The same with politics,” retorted Sean wryly.

“Is Irish politics as bad as American politics?”

“Pretty much. Like you say it’s all bullshit and the people fall for it each time.”

“Do you have two parties in Ireland like the American system?”

“No there are about four or five main parties and then a few smaller parties. Fine Gael and Fine Fáil are the two biggest ones. Fine Fáil used be the biggest before the 2008 economic crash wiped them out.”

“The fall of Lehman Brothers?”

“Yes, that had a huge effect in Ireland. The political landscape was changed. “All changed, changed utterly, a terrible beauty is born,”” Yeats said.

“That’s WB Yeats, the poet, is it not?”

“Yes, WB Yeats, the famous poet.”

“Where did he live?”

“I think he spent most of his time in Sligo. But he travelled a lot. Coole Park in Gort Co. Galway has a tree in which he signed his name. I think he lived in a tower on the Loughrea road also.”

“I must visit Gort then.”

“Gort is lovely. Very small but full of nice people. You could go into O Sullivans for a nice meal or there are a few coffee shops or even Supermacs.”

“Is that a restaurant?”

“It’s a fast food restaurant that is famous in Ireland. It has many stores in Ireland. It is owned by a Galway man. It’s like the McDonalds of Ireland.”

“I must visit Coole Park to see that tree. Yeats is one of my heroes.”

“The tree is massive and overgrown. It’s very popular. I think they have deer in Coole Park as well that you could see.”

“I love that poem by Yeats, The Lake Isle of Innisfree. So short but so sweet.”

“It’s one of my favourite poems as well.”

“What are its themes?”

“It’s all about escaping. Getting away from everyone and being happy on your own. Walden by Henry David Thoreau was a huge influence on it.”

“He was the guy who lived off the land for a couple of years.”

“Yea that’s him. It had a huge influence on Yeats. The whole idea is that we don’t need people or things to make us happy. We can be happy just by ourselves.”

“I think the world is so brainwashed on materialism that the philosophy of these guys goes unnoticed.”

“Yes, very much. Although guys like Thoreau and Yeats were I would guess psychologically unique. They weren’t like mainstream society who are addicted to conversation and other things.”

“That’s how I make my money sure, men are addicted to sex,” she said laughing.

“This is how economies turn. People buy things they don’t need and do things they don’t need to do.”

“That is the world as we know it.”

“If only man could sit quietly by himself.”

“If only he could tolerate his loneliness a bit more.”

“And his boredom.”

“So is there anywhere else nice to visit in Galway.”

“You could always go into Galway city. There is plenty to do there.”

“Like what?”

“Well there are many pubs. Then you could go on a tour of the city or of Lough Corrib. You could go kayaking also. There are a few shops, but Galway city isn’t much of a shopping district. Then you could see Eyre Square and the Spanish Arch. I’m not sure why they call it the Spanish Arch but it is a nice area. Then of course you could see Salthill which is lovely.”

“What’s in Salthill?

“It’s a beach. The water is a bit cold here in Ireland. But you could always take a walk by the promenade with the mighty Atlantic Ocean just a whisper away. You will see lots of people walking dogs there.”

“I might do that.”

“You could go diving as well.”

“Diving?”

“Yes, they have a diving platform. But the water would be freezing.”

“I don’t know about that. Seems a bit dangerous.”

“Not at all. I did it once in the night time. It was cool. You just want to make sure someone is with you. In case you get into trouble.”

“I will have to see. I don’t really want to be risking my life.”

“Of course, you could go to see NUIG.”

“NUIG. What’s that?”

“That’s the university in Galway city. It’s near enough to the city centre. It’s a very old university.”

“That would be interesting. Did any famous people go there?”

“A lot of politicians. That’s about it I think.”

“Some of the universities in America have notable alumni. Some geniuses.”

“Ireland doesn’t really have too many geniuses. George Stoney coined the term “electron,” with regards the atom. Ernest Walton won the Nobel prize for splitting the atom. I think we have a lot of writers. George Bernard Shaw, Oscar Wilde, Samuel Beckett and James Joyce.”

“He’s the guy who wrote Ulysses?”

“Yea that’s him. I don’t read too many books because I am mildly dyslexic, so I haven’t read any of their works, although Wilde has some great quotes.”

“Me neither. I prefer to watch films rather than read.”

“Not too many people read books these days.”

“If you want to make money, books aren’t the best method.”

“John Banville who is another contemporary Irish writer, who is considered a genius, had to write a series of detective books under an alias.”

“Because he wasn’t making enough money?”

“Pretty much. Bearing in mind that his books will probably win him the Nobel Prize in the future.”

“I remember thinking alright that if you looked at the last twenty winners of the Nobel prize for literature, I would not have heard of any of them, let alone read their books.”

“I think people want to read thrillers. They don’t want to read these artistic books.”

“It’s the same with film. It’s the thrillers that make the money. The avant-garde French or Italian films by Jean Luc Goddard or Michelangelo Antonioni are ignored.”

“You are a fan of cinema, I take it?”

“Oh yes. I love watching films be they box office or artistic.”

“What’s your favourite film?”

“I would have to say Once Upon a Time in the West by Sergio Leone.”

“That’s probably the best western ever made. The music by Ennio Moricone is brilliant.”

“It’s very good and Claudia Cardinale looks so beautiful.”

“Have you seen Once Upon a Time in America?”

“Yes. Although I didn’t think it matched the western, it was still a pretty damn good film”

“It’s one of my favourites. That and The Thin Red Line by Terrence Malick and a few of Stanley Kubrick’s.”

“Stanley Kubrick, I would consider a genius. So many of his films were top-notch.”

“I would rank Kubrick as probably the greatest director of all time. In my opinion he was better than Hitchcock, Spielberg and Welles.”

“That’s an interesting thought.”

“Well so many of his films were incredible. Only Hitchcock and Spielberg can match him for repeatedly producing masterpieces. Have you seen Eyes Wide Shut?”

“Yes. I thought it was a bit slow but still good.”

“In my opinion it was the film of that decade. It was an absolute masterpiece.”

“He died during it did he not?”

“I think he died soon after it was released. He got a heart attack.”

“How old was he?”

“I think he was in his seventies.”

“2001- A Space Odyssey is a masterpiece no doubt.”

“It’s one of the greatest films let alone science fiction films.”

“What was the man doing at the end?”

“I don’t know. I always wondered about that. It was kind of surreal.”

“Like The Shining.”

“Another genius of a film.”

The New Species.

Diary: Day 29

The war progressed. Whilst initially it was contained to just the awesome Chinese countryside, it soon moved across the borders once the New Species gained the upper hand. It went into Russia and surrounding East Asia. Eventually it progressed to Eastern Europe, down to the Middle East and into mainland Europe. When the New Species gained a complete upper hand in those continents they attacked the Americas. Before they could do this however the United States of America attempted one last audacious plan to turn the tide back in the favour of mankind before the New Species set foot on American Soil. They decided to nuclear bomb Europe, Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Numerous fusion bombs were detonated in these areas. These were so powerful that humans, animals and the New Species would be vaporised. Buildings were destroyed as the mushroom clouds eclipsed the sun. However, generals were pessimistic about its chances of completely eliminating the New Species given their resistance to the intense heat. The bombs would destroy most life within a forty mile radius and with that it was understood that this would be a war that would continue until either all the New Species were eradicated or all of mankind was beaten.

Both North America and South America then upped the ante further to prevent any New Species from landing on their continents. A huge army operation was initiated on both the Pacific coasts and the Atlantic coasts to prevent the new species from infecting the Americas. The USA put into operation a huge marine escort of submarines and ships. These patrolled the Americas day and night. There was one problem however in that it was impossible to distinguish a New Species individual from a genetic human being. The New Species, although genetically enhanced to resist extreme heat or cold, they looked identical to normal man. Normal humans could not distinguish humans from the New Species, but the New Species, using their infra-red could tell who was human and who was New Species, given that the New Species were cold blooded and thus radiated a different temperature to that of normal humans. In an effort to counter this the Americas shut down the airports and the ferries. Anyone from Europe, Asia or Africa was shot dead in case they were an enemy.

This managed to contain the advance of the New Species for a while and along with the fusion bombs that were dropped on Asia and Europe, the enemy was halted in its tracks. But eventually the USA ran out of fuel to manufacture the

fusion bomb as the uranium ore had to be imported from China. With Europe and East Asia in tatters, there was no means of acquiring the uranium ore needed to help ignite the fusion bombs. So, years passed by without any effect on the Americas and a proxy war raged across various parts of Europe, Asia and Africa. Millions of people died however. The food industry had been marginalized and the Americas refused to even negotiate with the infected zones of the world. People starved to death or died from the cold. And they were the lucky ones. Many more were tortured by the New Species or sent to the camps where they were bred as farm animals to further the needs of the New Species.

There were various human militias still scattered across Europe and Asia that engaged in tit for tat warfare against the New Species. Humans would attack a regiment of the New Species and the New Species would in turn retaliate. The years passed by without an end in sight. While initially humans vastly outnumbered the New Species by twenty to one, this greatly changed given the ability of the New Species to reproduce at such a quick rate. While the humans inflicted great damage on the New Species it was not enough to completely eradicate the species altogether. What the New Species did was smart. They retreated from the battle altogether and went into hiding in the forests and derelict towns of the now crippled Europe and Asia. This then gave the impression that they had been defeated in battle and the humans rejoiced at such a finding. But what the New Species actually did was they increased their numbers exponentially and then when the time was right they launched a massive counter attack against the human militias who were caught unawares and easily defeated. News about this incisive attack filtered through to the Americas and they were once again put on maximum alert. They too like their European counterparts had assumed that the New Species had all but been eliminated from the planet. How wrong they were.

With this new galvanized front, the New Species quickly took over Europe and moved on towards Africa and Asia where they achieved more victories over the terrified human beings. In this great purge they rapidly solidified their power over man and purged millions in an effort to rid the world of the inferior being. Millions if not billions of innocent and harmless men, women and children were slaughtered in this extermination. The New Species then concocted a plan to feed their hungry patrons through setting up human farms where men and women were bred to be consumed. So many humans were distraught at such a

proposition that they committed suicide and frequently would kill their own children as well to spare them the suffering and horror of being tortured for fun by the New Species. Some managed to escape into the wilderness and survive a few more weeks but eventually succumbed to the starvation and cold. As time passed the little pockets of human groups that remained were defeated, captured, beaten and eaten until there were no more pockets of these militias in mainland Europe, Africa or Asia.

Economics had broken down in this sordid world. Life was no longer about love and careers. It was about hunger, warmth and safety. It was about survival. Those humans who managed to remain free in the derelict Europe or Asia had to use all their ingenuity and willpower to remain alive. They had little food and so had to hunt wild deer. They had no shelter and so they had to live in caves or forests. Then the New Species were scavenging the area repeatedly to hunt any renegades who had managed to flee the camps. The world of working or going to the cinema or going on a date was vanquished. Life now fully revealed itself for what it was when man was no longer the primary being of this planet. So many of the humans in the camps and those that were free, finally began to realize who, where and what they were. So many began to appreciate just the simple thought of being alive in this world. A cup of coffee became a luxury in this nomadic existence. Chocolate was like gold in that it was in such short supply. Love had all but perished in the harsh landscape. Law and order broke down amongst the rebels for there was no court system to adjudicate as to who was the perpetrator and who was the victim. Some humans even took to killing their own just so they could eat and that alone was evidence of just how far law and order had fallen. Rapes against women increased tenfold. Men were of the opinion that if they only had weeks or days to live they may as well enjoy it. The appearance of these human rebels was in stark contrast to that of the previous functioning society. Women now were no longer obsessed about their looks. Men had no means to shave their beards. Clothes were ragged and dirty. People no longer bathed themselves because they did not have the means to. Mankind truly was reduced to an animal like status. But there were some who revelled in this way of life. There were some who struggled in normal life that found this oneness with nature inspiring. But most could not entertain the change. They could not adapt to the wilderness and thus died of starvation or by committing suicide.

Of those who had the will to remain alive it took great ingenuity to evade the New Species. By now the New Species had taken over the cities and all the infrastructure. They had the technology of the armies at their disposal. They regularly commandeered helicopters and drones to analyse pockets of countryside where suspected rebels were hiding out. If they discovered any rebels they would either bomb the area remotely with napalm or they would send in the army to capture the rebels and place them in the confines of a concentration camp. It was very difficult to survive in the wilderness. If the New Species didn't catch you, you would more than likely succumb to the cold and starvation. Many rebels attempted to flee this new order through using ships to cross the Atlantic Ocean to the Americas, but even that was extremely risky. The Americas, especially the United States had a zero-tolerance policy on any foreign object, be it a plane, a ship, a submarine or a person. If it showed up on the radar that the object was close, then they would bomb it until it was obliterated. So many attempted this perilous journey to the Americas and so many died from dehydration before they had even come close to this promised land.

The Americas reached out to the New Species and pleaded with them to find some common ground so the war could end. But The New Species were adamant that they were now the superior race on the planet. Initially they played along with the Americas and gave the illusion that they were happy with the current position. So, they would engage in meetings over the internet or phone calls to the president of the United States of America who was by now the de facto leader of the Americas. With America particularly nervous about what had happened in mainland Europe and Asia, they were intent on reaching a solution that would benefit both parties. Life in America had now deteriorated since the immergence of the New Species. Where once people worked nine to five and watched TV in the evening, they were now in full alert. The farms still operated as food was necessary to keep them alive. But the banking industry had taken a hit. Oil was running out too. America knew that it could not import this necessity from the Middle East and had to rely on its own reserves which were now running low. Overall life had taken a sudden hit like a boxer who is knocked out cold in the ring. The people of the Americas did manage to maintain a comfortable existence but they were angst ridden. Tomorrow could be the day that the New Species launched an attack on their soil. They slept with one eye open at all times for all it took was one New Species individual to infect their land and the battle would begin.

The Bering Strait was the most governed piece of land in the world now. The USA had planes flying routinely day and night over this patch of sea. This was a weakness in the armoury of the Americas and one which the New Species saw as a means to take advantage. The Army despite the extreme cold conditions was stationed all along the Alaskan border of this particular partition of sea. If a mouse even moved, rockets would be launched. A ceasefire was in operation but even the Americas knew that they could not trust the New Species and were extremely paranoid. Any unidentified ships or planes were immediately taken out. There was no sentiment when the future of mankind was at risk. It was like the Cold War all over again except this time America was dealing with a shrewder enemy and one that was intent on complete world domination.

A compromise was reached. The New Species would occupy Europe, Asia, Australia and Africa while human beings would be stationed in the Americas. The people of North and South America celebrated with such news. Finally, they could sleep in peace without worry. But the universal ceasefire was littered with difficulties. For one no economic trade was allowed between the two sectors. The Americas would see their GDP shrink because of this. Furthermore, the government had pleaded with the New Species to allow captured human beings to be deported to the safer haven of the Americas but the New Species rejected this proposal.

Those in the concentration camps wondered where was God in all this? Where had he disappeared to? Was god made in the image of man or in the image of the New Species? They gradually began to realize that it was all a deception. That they had been lied to daily by the powers that be. They came to understand that the biggest threat to mankind was man himself and if only they had been a little more cautious and had not been consumed by the greed of earning money, maybe just maybe the status quo would not have altered. Man had been too preoccupied with his own coffers that he had allowed a beast to grow and grow. This beast was now to signal the end of mankind as we knew it. The New Species held all the aces. Man could only beg for mercy from this superior being and many did. When they were being led out with the electric prods to be euthanized they would cry, and they would fall, and howl and they would beg for their lives. But the New Species turned a blind eye and just became conditioned to the pain.

Henry's Story

"I was once loved," said Henry.

"So was I," said Levi.

"How did you come to be in this situation?"

"I was minding my own business on the streets. My owner had let me out for a run. Then out of nowhere I was snatched by three men and pulled into a van. I was taken to a warehouse. I couldn't recognise where it was. But there were other dogs there and then I was thrown into a cage with the other dogs and we were transported to a huge building. At that building they did tests on us. For years I was tested on. I had chemicals injected into my eyes. I had my skin burned. I had teeth pulled out. Eventually the building closed down and we were thrown out into the street. I was snatched again and then taken here."

"Terrible."

"I know. How did you come to be here?"

"I once had a home and a family who loved me. But when I was out walking with them I became lost. I never found them and I wandered as a stray for weeks before I too was snatched by these men in a van and taken here."

"The conditions are awful, aren't they? I haven't eaten in days since I was taken. I haven't drunk in days either. There is only so much more I can take."

"We have to hang in there. There is no use giving up."

"All we have is hope."

"But hope is better than nothing. We have to look at the positives and try to remain positive."

"They are going to slaughter us. I can hear the screams of my fellow animals. I can hear them yelling in the night. I can't sleep because of it."

"Yes, it is hard to sleep in the conditions. It is freezing and I am starving."

"How could they be so cruel to us?"

"We are sub-human. We are just economic commodities to them. They need to be fed just as much as us and thus they cannot see how cruel they are."

“Those that inflict cruelty do not understand that they are cruel.”

“True.”

“The Chinese are good people. I know in my heart the world is good and worth fighting for. I would in my anger say the Chinese were a nation of savages. That they were not human. That man is judged by how he treats his fellow animals. But that is wrong. The Chinese are good people.”

“I am not so sure. God, I am so tired here.”

“I haven’t slept in days. I have been too afraid to sleep.”

“I tried to sleep but found the concrete wet floor too hard.”

“How could they do this to us?”

“After all the love we show to them and this is how we end up.”

“Maybe someone will rescue us.”

“Hopefully.”

“Look at us. We are drenched in our own urine and faeces. They are animals.”

“The Chinese are good people. I know in my heart that they are. They are just blinded by their own want to survive.”

“If us dogs were the dominant species would we treat them humans as such?”

“That is a good question. Would we use them as pets or would we crucify them?”

“I would like to think that we would be kind to them.”

“But then again we could be just as cruel to them as they are to us now.”

“It is so sad that this is the end. I thought I would live for a few more years in such comfort.”

“We mustn’t wallow in self-pity. We can still escape this hazardous situation. No matter how dark the world, we must supply our own light.”

“But who has escaped?”

“No one I know off, but that doesn’t mean we can’t ourselves. We have to keep our eyes open for a moment.”

“But would we not be better off in prison than to be free?”

“I would rather die free than live in a cage.”

“I guess we wouldn’t know until we are put in such a situation. How I yearn to be reunited with my owners. They used feed me twice a day and look after me. They were nice.”

“My masters also spoilt me. They made me feel loved and that is all I wanted.”

“God, looking back makes me think of how good I had it. Whilst millions of dogs starved on the side of the street, I was pampered like no other.”

“And those dogs have never known love. Life is a daily struggle.”

“This is all because man artificially engineered us to be useless. They created us to be defunct in the environment.”

“The falcon has its speed, the cat has its stealth, the hyena has its stamina. All these animals have certain traits that enable them to seek prey and find a food source. Ever since we were domesticated we have lost the qualities to survive.”

“Our ancestors were great pack hunters. They could stalk a deer for hours until it gave up with exhaustion. Now with my long ears I can’t even hear a thing. And they hurt from time to time.”

“We were created without due diligence. But then again, no matter how cruel, a life is better than no life at all.”

“They also bred us to submit to them unconditionally. Look at us. We are deeply afraid of humans. We are too afraid to unite and rebel against our captors. We are condemned. We will never find our freedom if we are too afraid.”

“Why don’t we unite then?”

“Part of the reason is we are too afraid to die.”

“And so all of us end up dying then of course.”

“Exactly.”

“I suppose all we can do is pray.”

“To who, a god that doesn’t exist? A god that is built in the image of man?”

“Perhaps he will save us.”

“Every night I wonder where god is in all this. Where is he?”

“He will come. If not, we may find a better life in heaven.”

“I don’t know about that. Heaven is an entity created by man to service man. Even if it did exist I doubt it would accommodate us dogs.”

“So all we can do is watch and listen to our fellow friends being tortured to death and wait for the axe to fall on us?”

“Pretty much, unless we rebel.”

“Why don’t we then?”

“Lives will be lost. Can you sell such a proposition to the others confined here?”

3

Saw Summer Sunsets

Drinking all the day in old pubs where fiddlers love to play.
Someone touched the bow, he played a reel, it seemed so fine and gay.
Stood on Dingle beach and cast, in wild foam we found Atlantic Bass.

"So why did you become an escort?" asked Sean, "if you don't mind me asking."

"I get that question a lot," she replied smiling. "I don't know. It was a combination of things. I was struggling to find work elsewhere. I had a degree in marketing but that wasn't going too well. Then I came across a woman on the internet who said she had changed her life by becoming a sex worker. So I tried it and realized it wasn't as bad as it was made out to be."

"There is a lot of stigma alright, in particular from other women."

"Well women have been programmed from childhood that the means to enjoy yourself sexually is through a relationship. Not one-night stands, not through becoming an escort and not by other means."

"Yea the man gets a pat on the back when he has sex. The woman gets demeaned."

"It is sexism. Pure and simple. We laud one sex of the species and we vilify the other sex. The woman who enjoys herself sexually is considered a leper."

"And what I think people fail to realize is that love is to an extent a form of prostitution."

"A famous feminist once said that marriage is just the prostitution to one man instead of many men."

"Marriage is in some ways the biggest prostitution ring in the world. What marriage definitely is, is a system. Both are systems. It's just one system is extoled and the other is rejected."

"But why is one system acceptable and the other ridiculed?"

“That’s just the way the world has adapted. The fact that you have parents yourself pressures you into becoming one. Then all your friends are married and you are under more pressure to marry. Then all your co-workers are married and you are under even more pressure. Then you see all these celebrities married and you think, “if only I had what they had, then I would be happy.””

“We fear the very people we love and we don’t realize that.”

“What did your parents say when you told them you were an escort.”

“They weren’t too impressed. I came from a strict religious background where the path for life was work and marriage. To digress from that was seen as a sin.”

“Do you still talk to them?”

“We kind of drifted apart. I still go home at Christmas to see them but other than that we don’t talk too much. What about yourself?”

“Ah yea I still see my parents from time to time. I came like you from a strict childhood. I had to study four hours at night. I had to be the polite model child. My father was a good man but very strict.”

“Sounds like my father too.”

“I don’t think parents realize that if they are too strict on their children that it can have a detrimental effect on their mentality.”

“Yes, I think some parents put so much pressure on their children to succeed, that it ends up being a negative.”

“Confidence is all parents have to give to their children. The confidence to go out into the world and make something of themselves. If they don’t have confidence they won’t go far.”

“Social skills are so important. I have known people who had great CV’s but couldn’t talk and didn’t get the job. I have known people who had poor CV’s but had good interpersonal skills and thus went far in life.”

“The quality of the person is as important as the quality of the CV.”

“True, very true. I see kids study morning, noon and night who won’t be able to deal with stress when they grow up.”

“Doctors!”

“It has a high suicide rate, doesn’t it?”

“Medicine! Yes. I think these students go through school and college with top marks and know everything about everything except themselves. They then lack the ability to cope with stress. They then take out a mortgage and from there they become doused in anxiety and they take their own lives.”

“How you respond to stress is so important. Some people can deal with it; some people can’t.”

“The pressure gets to some people including myself,” said Sean.

“In what way?”

“I am on disability. I could never deal with the uncertainty of the professional environment. My mind just goes. It’s the GAD. It kicks in whenever there is uncertainty.”

“That’s generalized anxiety disorder?”

“Yes, that’s it. It’s very disabling. Basically, I just think of the worst thing that could happen in such a situation and I start to ruminate and ruminate obsessively. Marriage is out of the question as well.”

“So even dating would be a big-no?”

“Oh yes. I would be sweating with the anxiety. I kind of just spend all my time alone.”

“With Henry.”

“Henry is all I have. He is like a brother to me.”

“Not many people would exclaim that their dog is their brother.”

“Oh, I consider him as such. He’s my best friend in this world. All he wants is to be loved, fed and taken for walks.”

“When I retire I will probably get a dog.”

“What breed?”

“I’m not sure. Maybe a guard dog to protect me or maybe a pit bull.”

“A pit bull would be great. Such a loving dog with such a bad reputation.”

“Yea. The people who say pit bulls are dangerous don’t know them.”

“That is what stigma does.”

“So much prejudice in the world. Anyhow all I want is a dog. I don’t need a man to make me happy. All I need is a dog.”

“That’s like me. All I have is Henry and my freedom, which is more than most people. So are you planning on settling down in the near future?”

“I will continue for the foreseeable future until I have made enough to set up my own business.”

“What is that?”

“Well I am hoping to set up a beauty salon.”

“That would be interesting. Would you get married?”

“Not a chance. And have children. They would drive you insane.”

“You are like me so.”

“Would you ever settle down?”

“No way. I enjoy my solitude too much. I love being free.”

“Same with me. That is one thing escorting affords me at the moment. I get to travel the world and see all the different cultures and make money while I do it.”

“I haven’t been on a holiday in years. I am very frugal. I enjoy pattern in my life. I get up, take the dog for a walk, write, eat my lunch, watch the news and then go to bed. That has been my life for the last twenty years.”

“Would you not like to see the world?”

“Every night when I look at the stars I see it all when I look at the universe.”

“How fortunate we are to be alive in this world.”

“Yes, very true and yet we don’t appreciate our lives. How many in America have it all and yet cry themselves to sleep at night?”

“There is a disease of self-pity in American culture. It is not enough to exist in America; one must have a desired existence.”

“I look at people and I see desperation. Men are desperate to be wanted by the females and women by the males. They are consumed by this chase. So much that they drench themselves in self-pity and self-absorption.”

““If only I was this; if only I wasn’t that,” they say.”

“Man, despite being top of the food chain is still unhappy. He is despite his riches the most disconsolate animal of all. You know I look at dogs locked in cages in East Asia for their whole lives and they are not unhappy. They suffer, but they are not unhappy.”

“Man is the only animal that can feel sorry for itself. He is the only insecure animal.”

“Capitalism is in a sense a disease. It infects the minds of people. It tells them they can’t be happy until they are living this dream life.”

“What is the anti-dote?”

“Buddhism.”

“Why?”

“Buddhism is not so much a religion. It is more of a psychology. It is more of a philosophy. It is more of a way of thinking or a state of being. The capitalist is material. He or she must have a house, a relationship, a job, a technology to be happy. They must have this certain image and they then assume that having that certain image will procure happiness. Buddhism is not material. It is about becoming one with the universe. It is about discovering yourself and accepting how privileged it is to be alive on this planet in this universe.”

“I would concur. We are too engrossed in the material nature of things. But where does this skewed mentality stem from?”

“Education. Simple as. Education is where the indoctrination begins. This is where we inculcate the next generation to behave in a certain way so that they will contribute to an economy. Education is indoctrination.”

“God, I never thought of it as that.”

“One has to ask two questions: Why is education mandatory and what is the consequence of a mandatory education! Every country or every culture has a system of education in place. The powers that be, the illuminati have decided

that this is the best method of brainwashing its citizens to behave a certain way."

"Brainwashed?"

"We are brainwashed to want certain things in life. The majority of men and women of this highly intelligent species have decided to marry since they were children. This idea has been implanted in their minds from a very young age just like the tooth fairy or Santa Claus."

"But we grow out of them."

"Exactly. But we never grow out of conforming. We instinctively calculate that our happiness lies in marriage and careers."

"We can see no other existence."

"We can't. If intelligent life were to observe us on Earth they would see how we use women as breeding machines to keep the species alive. We then bombard them with romantic propaganda to encourage them to procreate. Furthermore, we convince them that becoming a mother is an esteemed thing to do. Society has been brainwashed to conform, to mimic the pattern and the reason all this is done is not because it is a necessity or right but because this is how economies are kept alive."

"You remind me of George Carlin."

"The comedian?"

"Yea that's him. "It's called the American Dream because you would have to be asleep to believe it.""

"Try telling that to a married mother. She would spit in your face."

"In fairness we see this in all cultures. When you try to tell a religious person that there is no god they get angry. You see people need purpose in this world. A woman derives it from getting married and rearing children."

"They cannot live in a meaningless universe."

"Man with the gift of language can see back in time and can see into the atom. Yet we are blind to what we really are. We treat ourselves as above animal but we are just an animal that can speak."

““Just an animal that can speak,” that is rather a nihilistic view to take.”

“It’s true though. If we could not speak, we would still be climbing the trees.”

“I think people are so engrossed in work and relationships that they negate the realities of this world. That much I agree with.”

“And we slaughter animals in their billions to fuel us and we think nothing of it. Man is the tumour of this great planet.”

“What will it take to come to our senses?”

“Only when the end is near will we truly realize who we are.”

The New Species

Diary: Day 30

The New Species, not content to control Europe, Asia, Australia and Africa set about attacking the Americas even though there was a ceasefire. The Americas knew they could not trust the New Species just as a gazelle could never trust a hyena. The Bering Strait was the obvious weak link in the human being's armoury but it was so well occupied with military personnel that it would be a long bloody battle. The New Species looked at other areas for possible leaks and there were many. The United States of America was a no go. It was too well patrolled to even dream of attacking it despite its huge coast line. South America, while not as protected by a military presence was also dismissed as viable by the New Species. But they found a weak-link in the huge island of Greenland. Greenland was ignored by humans with regards security. They assumed it was too far for the New Species to cross by sea from Europe. Furthermore, it was too cold to lay siege to. So, what the New Species did was intelligent. They ventured north of Russia towards the Arctic circle. They set up camps there and acclimatized themselves to the extreme harshness of the weather and its landscape. They then crossed the Arctic circle and made their way towards Greenland. The operation took about six months because they did not wish to alert the humans to their plan. They then set about constructing camps in Greenland towards the North which were out of sight of Canada and the United States. Once they had a sizeable presence in Greenland they marched south, slowly but surely, in the frozen terrain. By the time human kind was alerted to their presence, it was already too late. They had captured Greenland and were now in the process of crossing the islets of ice into Canada. War was initiated by the Americas. Greenland was bombed by the humans and North Canada was bombed and attacked by the New Species. The people fled Northern Canada towards the south where they sought the protection from the USA. But even the power of the United States was lacklustre against this war machine. The New Species advanced month by month towards the border of the United States until Canada surrendered. They then seized the whole of Canada and Alaska too fell to their forces. Now it was the USA who was tasked with saving mankind.

A great war was in the making. The United States was still a formidable foe. They had the military and the will to defend themselves and it would not be easy for the New Species. The United States also had South America to back

them up, who were themselves terrified of what would happen if North America fell to the enemy. Then there were also the militias of Canada, little pockets of rebels who remained in their country to fight to the death against this toxic enemy. Initially another ceasefire was conceived, but this was only a means for the New Species to build up their army along the border with the United States. The states responded by posting tanks all across the border and they also deployed planes in constant operation above them. The scene was set for a war of titanic proportions.

Meanwhile the New Species were slipping in members of their own species across the holes in the long border. Despite the scrutiny displayed by the States, they could not patrol every mile of the border. The war was delayed by two years. Both sized each other up and both threatened each other. But eventually the time came when the New Species decided it was the right moment to attack. They crossed the border and engaged the tanks and army in war. They then used their spies that had slipped in to the country undetected to carry out guerrilla style attacks on important people. A number of generals were killed and the president was under a secure lockdown at all times. But it was impossible for humans to tell a New Species individual from a human individual and as such they were able to approach the most important people in America without being discovered. So many politicians and generals were assassinated because of this. Other New Species then reproduced and set about increasing the number of their species within the Americas.

The war initially tilted in the favour of mankind. America defended its position with all its might and made advances into northern Canada. The people rejoiced at these victories and felt optimistic again. Maybe just maybe human kind would repel this new invader. But the New Species were durable. For every member of their species that was slaughtered, they could just as easily replace them given their quick reproduction rates. So new members were drafted in to replace the dead soldiers. Human kind incurred heavier losses and gradually they found it difficult to replenish those losses. They then had to draft in older people and then were reduced to child soldiers such was the lack of able bodied men who could fight. Eventually the tide swung in the favour of the New Species. The coalition of the USA and South America was beaten into submission and although the war for mankind would last another two years it was obvious that they would be defeated. They just couldn't cope with the overwhelming numbers of the New Species. They would kill a thousand of the

New Species through bombing and two thousand would replace them. It seemed that the more they killed, the more numbers of New Species personnel would arrive. Added to this was the numbers of New Species that had infiltrated the country and set about reproducing in such high numbers. Slowly the war for mankind began to shift in favour of the modified human. They swarmed the north-west part of America. Seattle fell and then they moved in towards North Dakota and California. They were strangling society of its will. Along the way they slaughtered millions of men, women and children. Those that fled along the highways only delayed the inevitable for it wouldn't be long before the New Species attacked Mexico and South America.

The president was evacuated and moved to South America. They saw a chance to arrest the gains of the New Species through prioritising South America above all else. But like North America it too would eventually succumb to the power of the New Species. The powers that be, those that remained, ordered the Panama Canal to be blown to pieces, thus widening the gap and arresting the onslaught of the New Species. This temporarily disrupted their plans and gave a momentary sense of jubilation to the remaining humans who resided in South America. They then again reached out to the New Species and pleaded for a stay of execution but none was forthcoming. The New Species now controlled about eighty five percent of the land mass on planet Earth. They held all the aces now and they also had in their arsenal the military stockpile of China, America and Russia.

This eventually led to the pulverization of South America and its surrender. The war ships of the New Species surrounded South America from the Brazilian coastline to the western coasts of Chile and Peru. Missiles were being launched from submarines, aircraft carriers and war ships. A ground invasion was launched on the shorelines of Columbia. These things quickly led to the defeat of the last refuge of mankind. Many humans fled into the jungles of the Amazon, which in turn was sort of a death sentence as they had no skill or will to survive. Many more were captured and sent to the numerous gulags of the New Species which were spread throughout each continent. The world had changed and was crumbled from war. But most importantly man was no longer at the apex of the food chain.

Some animals survived and the New Species were more compassionate towards them than humans were. For some reason they were gentle towards those animals that man would have considered vermin. The farmed chickens were set

free into the wild. The moon bears of china were finally uncaged. The dogs of East Asia were no longer violently killed for their meat and instead they became an important part of the New Species day to day life. The cattle were reared so that they could just eat grass all day, as were the lambs. Animals found a new liberation with the New Species as man watched on from the dirty faeces infected camps. It was almost as if man had been punished by God for his menacing leadership that had seen animals become extinct and the polar ice caps melt. The New Species unlike their close relative displayed a compassion for the universe. They wanted a fertile land. They were not consumed by money and image. They had enough just through existing.

As the war finished and the New Species consolidated its victory, a sense of peace finally took over. The New Species first set out by rebuilding the cities and the transport lines. In order to achieve this rapidly, they employed human subjects like prisoners to work in awful conditions. It was either too hot or it was too cold. In any case millions died in this forced labour. Those that didn't work were tortured as an example to others. Those that did work perished soon after. But they were the lucky ones. Millions of others were sent to the food factories and bred as livestock to fuel the hunger of the New Species. They were systematically raised like farm animals or cattle to fuel the appetite of the New Species. Many were enclosed in terrible conditions with little food or water. There would be twenty or so humans in one cage without any toilet or warmth. They would be fed a diet of watered rice to fatten them up. If they refused to eat they would be dragged out and a tube was forced down their throats and the rice was pumped in manually to fill up their stomach. They were shaken and they urinated on the ground as they were poked and prodded with electric prods to make them comply. Once fattened up they were locked into a train compartment with others. There was no room to sit down and they all had to stand up. In some countries it was too hot and many died from heat stroke. In other countries such as Russia it was too cold and many lost toes and fingers to the bitter frost. Often their skin froze and stuck to the sides of the carriages, such was the coldness. Those that did die on the trips to the slaughter house were considered the lucky ones, for a torment awaited those that were alive. They were locked into another cage without adequate food and water or toilet facilities. Then when they were chosen for the slaughter they were grabbed around the neck with a cord and violently pulled out by the New Species. They then were tied to a pole and had their hands tied back. Then they were doused in petroleum and set on fire. The screams of agony as the fire melted into their flesh was

deafening. What was terrible was this took place in front of other humans who recoiled in horror. Some saw their loved ones burnt alive. Fathers watched on as their children were charred until they no longer could breathe. Another form of torture was to boil them alive. The New Species would heat a huge pot of water to boiling point and would throw in a man or a woman until they died. Their skin would then come off so easily. Another extreme method was to skin them alive. This was pain beyond pain and many would become delirious as the knife slit through their skin.

But it wasn't just food that the New Species used them for. In an effort to improve their own genetic code, they would carry out experiments on their human subjects. Limbs were hacked off and sewed together again without pain relief. Chemicals were forced down their throats or put in their eyes. They were deliberately starved to determine the longevity of man and some were put into large scale microwaves and heated for hours until they died. There was no sympathy on the part of the New Species. Man was an inferior being than them on the food chain and thus they could do what they wished with him. In other cases, the New Species held a blood day where millions of humans were sacrificed for good luck. Most were cruelly killed. Some were burnt alive, some were beaten to death, some had metal rods inserted into their spine, some were skinned alive. Some humans were released into a forest or jungle and hunted and shot in a form of sport. In other cases, two humans were made fight each other to the death whilst the New Species waged bets over who would win. Some humans were placed in zoos; some were used as slaves; most were farmed for their meat.

They encountered a problem soon though as humans began to get very scarce and thus their food supply diminished. They tried to force humans in the camps to breed with each other but the humans outright refused. They then threatened them with extreme torture that would last for months, but that still could not encourage the prisoners to mate and produce offspring. They tried to genetically engineer humans in the lab but that too was a failure because it required a lot of time and energy. Furthermore, they were cautious as to what they could produce in the labs and were afraid they would give birth to an even greater species than themselves just as the Chinese had done. A solution was however found but it meant compromise. In order to get the human subjects to mate they decided they would brainwash them. They would through various psychological methods impregnate their minds with romantic jargon that would encourage

them to fornicate and thus rear young. However, there was only so much this psychological brainwashing could achieve with the present system. They had to improve the lives of the humans in the camps. This meant a wholescale enlargement of the operation. Humans were released into a sort of ghetto that was specifically engineered for them. It had apartments. It was huge and incorporated an area this size of a small city. When humans were allowed their freedom it became easier to brainwash them into having children.

The brainwashing was carried out through both chemical and psychological means. They would inject chemicals into the subjects and then they would psychologically manipulate their minds through repeatedly showing them the same film over and over again. The combination of chemicals and this film then managed to make the humans reproduce. They forgot that they were imprisoned and would seek out partners. Then once a child or children were born, some were selected to be used as food for the New Species and the other lucky ones were “educated,” so they too would be brainwashed into wanting to have children themselves. The system was a success. Men and women started to fall in love with each other and would procreate and rear young. They then were brainwashed into giving up their children and the process would be repeated again and again.

This system of camps was no longer seen as a camp by humans. They had become so inured through the brainwashing to see this current life as viable. Young children grew up with the mentality that they were free and that their goal was to work and procreate. They then reared the next generation and so continued the cycle. Eventually as time passed by it reached a point wherein the old life of man was calmly forgotten. Those who had tasted the real world had all but died and the generation that inhabited the camps never knew what real freedom consisted of. The system worked extremely good for the New Species. There was a plentiful supply of humans to be eaten and there was also enough to insure that they would procreate. Many of these camps were dotted across the world. There were thousands in America alone and some were the size of New York. Human kind became so coerced that they came to see life as eating oats three times a day, living without heat and suffering all kinds of maladies that were present in the camps. They saw that their goal to live in this world was to work and procreate. They didn’t know why they did these things and they never questioned them either for that was all part of the brainwashing.

Of course, some who defied this brainwashing saw through the deception and actively questioned what they were doing. Some had the courage to criticize the conditions. Such individuals were dealt swiftly by the New Species to prevent a mutiny. There were some who were extremely smart and escaped the camps and lived in the rough terrain of the countryside. But even they knew that it was probably better to live in the camps, for they did not possess the means to survive outside. Disease and sickness were rampant in the camps and the New Species, who themselves were immune to many infectious agents, would do nothing to alleviate the pain. If there was a mass outbreak of typhus or syphilis they would purge a section or the whole camp and then start again. This was a common occurrence in the camps for there were too many people in such a small area without adequate sanitary facilities.

Henry's Story

"I wonder whether the rumours about being set on fire are true?" asked Henry.

"If they weren't we wouldn't have heard about them," replied Levi.

"How could anyone do such a horrible thing?"

"Even in America, the land of the free, it is known that some cruel men would tie up their dogs, drench them in petrol and set fire to them."

"And yet we bow to these people. We will never have our freedom so long as we consider ourselves inferior."

"And if you think we have it bad, look at the plight of the chickens."

"The chickens?"

"Yes they are farmed for their meat. They are raised in captivity with thousands of other chickens. They are over fed and injected with anti-biotics to engineer them to be bigger and healthier. Their eyes hurt and their limbs are too small. They then get slaughtered in their millions every day, just so man can eat a chicken curry."

"We have it good here?"

"We sure do. At least some men are humble towards our plight. If we were alive in America or Europe we would be looked after. It's just the Chinese have a taste for our meat."

"In Europe and America it is seen as wrong to eat dog meat."

"If only we were born there instead of here."

"Now all we can do is wait for the steel bar to fall on our heads."

"Then we have our necks slit and then we are burnt alive."

"We have every right to hate our masters."

"Some men are bad. I grant you that. But most men are good and that includes the Chinese. It's just that they have become so dehumanised to our struggle that they no longer see it as barbaric."

"At least we are not being used as bait dogs."

“Why we turn on each other is bewildering.”

“We try to impress our masters. That is all we want to do. To make them happy.”

“And they use it against us. They make us fight to the death for their amusement.”

“Or for money.”

“They are so cruel and yet we submit to their will.”

“Their judgement is absolute. That is how they bred us. To be their slaves. Man is the cancer on this planet.”

“Some men are. But I believe in men and I believe in the world. It is a good place and worth fighting for.”

“If only I wasn’t abducted, I would be living a good life now. My masters were so kind to me.”

“As were mine and that makes me believe in man. We cannot tar all of human kind just because a select few choose otherwise.”

“The abuse of animals is heinous. We are just commodities for their economy. We fuel their appetite.”

“Maybe in the future we will no longer be animals. Maybe in the future it is man who will be confined to cages, starving and dehydrated and near death. Maybe in the future man will be pulled out of his cage and clubbed to death and burned alive semi-conscious.”

“Hopefully.”

“The Chinese are good people. Once their standard of living improves, you will see a different attitude to how they approach animal welfare.”

“Then it will be another country such as Indonesia.”

“True, the pain will never end. A perfect world cannot exist so long as animals can suffer.”

“All we can do now is hope for the best.”

“Or we could rebel. Instead of accepting our fate we could challenge it.”

“But we are weak and frail and no one wants to die. This is why we are so afraid of rebelling because we know in order to make the rebellion successful, lives will have to be lost.”

“How many animals are in here, maybe twenty. If we can motivate them to fight we can escape.”

“And what then? We starve to death. Sometimes it is better to be chained than to be free.”

“But wouldn’t the fact that we are no longer facing a brutal death be a relief?”

“Starvation over the course of weeks is a brutal death.”

“I get the feeling you don’t want to be free.”

“Oh, I want to be free. I want to go back to my master and live a content life. But I know that will never happen. We must have travelled for hours in that truck when we were brought here. We might be two hundred miles from the city we used live in. And then we would have to find our master. It is impossible.”

“But maybe someone else may find us and adopt us.”

“Or maybe they will send us straight back here.”

“Wouldn’t it be better to fight and see what will happen rather than succumb to a brutal death?”

“Either we rebel or we resign ourselves to our fate; either way we will regret both.”

“One’s life should be an act of rebellion. We are our choices. We are responsible for what we choose and to sit back and let nature condemn us, is to do nothing. I would much rather fight and die for my freedom than do nothing and prolong the misery. If you are given a choice in life and one of those choices is freedom, always choose the freedom.”

“So how do we galvanize the troops? How do we motivate people to die?”

“We tell them that they will die either way. Choosing not to fight will only prolong the inevitable.”

“But these are weak dogs who are starving and diseased. There is no fight left in them.”

“What then do we do? Do we just let man do what he wishes to do?”

“If only there were some way to escape. If only we could chew through these iron bars.”

“Even if we could get past this cage, we would still have many more hurdles to negotiate before we can call ourselves free. Then when we get our freedom, if we did, we would have to contend with the cold and hunger. Freedom in this case is not so seductive.”

“But we must do something. We cannot just accept a certain death, a certain annihilation.”

“I agree. We must rebel in some way or form. We must come together and take the fight to man. We must not fear his fists and what they carry. But what becomes of us when we are free?”

“We search for a new master or we search for food and try to stay alive as long as possible.”

“Isn’t that what life invariably is? We try to stay alive for as long as possible.”

“Until we succumb to life itself.”

“What happens when we die, I often wonder?”

“Do we come back alive as another animal or is that it, no life anymore.”

“I’m inclined to believe the latter. We will no longer exist and any trace of us will purge into the abyss.”

“This is another reason why we should rebel. This is the only life we have and we may as well fight for it.”

“We must galvanize the troops. We must be honest with them. Some will die and some will not make it, if anyone makes it. But it is better than doing nothing is it not?”

“If we unite we can escape this situation. If we have the courage to take on our masters, to defy them, perhaps we can gain our freedom.”

“In some ways we are better off staying where we are.”

“And in some ways, we aren’t. It’s all a matter of perspective. How does one see themselves now? We can wallow in self-pity over what has happened, or we can try to remain positive in the face of such evil.”

“Those who cry are usually the first to die. It is those who try to remain content that live the longest. What makes good and bad? There is no such thing. A dog that has lived off the streets his whole life knows of no other existence. He comes to regard his street life as good. Unfortunately, it is those dogs who came from splendour that cannot adapt to this murky life of starvation and coldness. They had it too good and their minds cannot adjust to such drastic change.”

“No matter what the situation one must always be optimistic. If you give in you have no chance.”

“We must have hope. We must continue to be positive. We cannot let the situation devour us.”

4

Saw Summer Sunsets

Dreaming in the night, I saw a land where no man had to fight.
Waking in your dawn, I saw you crying in the morning light.
Lying where the Falcons fly, they twist and turn all in you e'er blue sky.

"So what is there to do in Clare and Limerick?" asked Katie.

"Clare, Limerick and Galway are much the same. Clare has the Burren, Ennis and the Cliffs of Moher. Limerick has Limerick city, Adare manor or you could even go see Thomond Park."

"Thomond Park! What is that?"

"It's the home of Munster who are a rugby team."

"Rugby is kind of similar to American Football."

"Yea, they are alike. They use the same shaped football."

"Do you watch much American Football?"

"Not really, but I know about Vince Lombardi."

"The greatest American Football coach of all time."

"Unquestionably. Arguably the greatest sports coach of all time also."

"Who rivals him?"

"Sir Alex Ferguson of Manchester United. Phil Jackson the basketball coach. Brian Cody the Kilkenny coach."

"Brian Cody! Who's he?"

"He is a hurling coach. Without question the greatest coach in GAA."

"I've heard of hurling alright. It's that really fast game."

"It's probably the greatest sport in the world. Kilkenny who are managed by Brian Cody are winning everything. He's like the Vince Lombardi of hurling. Then there is Gaelic Football. That's an alright game. A bit boring and certainly not as good as hurling."

“I must go to see a hurling match.”

“Do. If there is one thing you must see while you are here, it is a hurling match. The skill these guys play with is amazing.”

“I don’t know any famous hurling players though.”

“Henry Shefflin is probably the greatest of all time. Guys like Tommy Walsh and Joe Canning are also brilliant. Tommy Walsh must be pound for pound one of the greatest hurlers ever. Make sure you see a good match. One with Kilkenny or Tipperary or Galway.”

“And this is played all over Ireland.”

“This is the thing. It’s only played in some counties. It’s a hard game to master so you have to take it up when young. You can’t learn it as a grown man or woman.”

“I must see one of these matches. Is there a lot of money in hurling?”

“The players are amateur. They don’t get any money.”

“Why do they do it then?”

“For pride. For your county. It’s a very grassroots sport.”

“I heard there was a huge stadium in Dublin that is home to hurling?”

“Yea that’s Croke Park. It seats eighty thousand. Come All Ireland Final day, it will be filled to the brim.”

“I must visit that too.”

“You could also visit St. James’s Gate in Dublin, which is home to Guinness.”

“I love Guinness. You can’t beat it when having a steak and chips.”

“Well St James’s Gate is where Guinness was first brewed in 1759.”

“1759! Such a long time ago.”

“Yea before the famine. Alcohol then became a necessity in Irish culture.”

“The stereotypical alcoholic is an Irish man unfortunately.”

“It’s only at the weekend do you see the effects. They do be falling out of pubs.”

“Do you drink much?”

“I used when young. When I turned eighteen or nineteen I had low self-esteem and used to get drunk on nights out to quash the anxiety. Then I would make a fool out of myself. Thankfully I have grown up.”

“You were one of these tortured geniuses were you not, given that you are a writer?”

“I wasn’t a genius back then,” said Sean smiling. “But yea I think I have the same mentality as Van Gogh or Kafka, not that I am on their level. It’s true though. How many geniuses were troubled? John Forbes Nash springs to mind.”

“He was the famous economist who died in a car crash.”

“Yea that’s him. He was a paranoid schizophrenic.”

“Such genius then to be able to do what he did whilst being so ill.”

“I think part of the reason he was a genius was down to his schizophrenia. Great beauty is often borne of great tragedy.”

“It made him think differently.”

“Kurt Cobain was another one.”

“I think, certainly, fame killed him.”

“I have to be careful not to become famous. I want to succeed without succeeding; to fail without failing; to love without living. There are more tears shed over answered prayers than unanswered ones.”

“What does that mean?” asked Katie.

“That we dream of this good life but sometimes when our dreams are realized they become nightmares. This haunted Kafka. The Trial is a great book about the fear of being known.”

“He was the guy who was addicted to prostitutes, was he not?”

“I think he suffered such low self-esteem that he couldn’t be around the woman he loved. He could only love a woman who didn’t love him.”

“He could only be himself around a woman he didn’t care about.”

“A Madonna/Whore complex is what it is called.”

“You can’t make love to the woman you love, but you can screw a woman who means nothing. I see that a lot.”

“What type of clients do you get?”

“All types. Some are after power and control. Some are shy and can’t get a girlfriend. Some like you say have Madonna/Whore complexes and some are virgins. I remember one man who had never had sex and tried it and found it horrible and we never even got as far as sex.”

“That wasn’t me by any chance?”

“You don’t like sex? You wouldn’t be alive if it weren’t for sex.”

“I hear that often.”

“Have you ever tried it?”

“No.”

“So how do you know you don’t like it?”

“I just know. I think as well I am afraid.”

“Afraid of doing it?”

“No. What I mean is sexual crimes carry the most weight in society. Thus, I am afraid to do anything sexual in case I get in trouble. I don’t know, maybe I am just paranoid. It’s the world we live in now; look at a woman the wrong way and it is sexual harassment.”

“What do you like then?”

“I love analysing society. I love truth. I love trying to understand the pattern.”

“What pattern?”

“I am very curious. I am curious that if I look at a hundred women, a hundred will have long hair. I am curious as to why a homeless man who is content to sit by a bridge and collect pennies all day is happier than a man with three houses. I am curious about how millions could see the apple fall but only one had the

eagerness to discover why. To take the first point: We conform implicitly to appeal to the herd. When they ratify us we feel good. To take the second point: We instinctively compute our self-esteem and as such our self-happiness in terms of careers and relationships. When we fail at these things so too does our appetite for life. To take the third point: The majority of men and women will die and be forgotten because they measure success in terms of sex and love. Newton will be remembered in a thousand years' time because he chose to go his own path and not that of conformity."

"Wow that is pretty heavy stuff."

"That's my passion."

"You are kind of a psychologist."

"Yes. An existential psychologist or even a behavioural economist or maybe a sociologist. If you buy a cup of coffee, why did you buy that cup of coffee?"

"Because I wanted one," she said smiling.

"Yes, but one must try to understand the mechanics behind that choice. There is method behind every decision you make. That is what I am after."

"Truth."

"In a word yes. Like Henry David Thoreau."

"Is that who you named your dog after?"

"Well kind of."

"So you are into all these philosophers and psychologists I take it?"

"Yes. Rollo May and RD Laing would have had a profound influence on my theory. Then guys like Schopenhauer and Nietzsche would also have influenced me."

"Pretty heavy stuff."

"Once you enjoy it you get by it quickly. What are your passions?"

"Travelling, meeting new people and photography."

"The decisive moment."

“You know of Henri Cartier Bresson?”

“I think everyone knows of him.”

“I wish.”

“Is that what you plan on doing in Ireland?”

“Yes, I intend to travel around the country side and cities taking photos.”

“It’s a good country to do it.”

“Why is that?”

“It’s small.”

“The Atlantic Coast is very nice as I can see.”

“Good old Ireland.”

“There’s that song I heard about Ireland that really caught my attention. “Song for Ireland,” it’s called.”

“By Mary Black.”

“Yes.”

“*Living on your western shore; saw summer sunsets, I asked for more. I stood by your Atlantic Sea and I sang a song for Ireland.”*

“Such a lovely song for such a lovely country.”

The New Species
Diary: Day 31

The New Species set up their own order. It mirrored that of human kind in that it was an economic system. However, relationships were banned. Furthermore, because the New Species was able to manage for long periods without food and water, money was not a requirement. If something needed to be built they would use humans. If the humans refused to build it, they would torture them. They then concocted the idea to reinstall humans in the factories to produce commodities. So humans were now building cars, phones or even making beer so that the New Species could enjoy these things. It was a very smart plan in that the New Species realized that humans could do the work. They also realized that under the threat of torture humans would work for free, so long as they had the energy to do so.

Of course, the danger with such a system was that the humans could break out and start a new war and because of this they were under observation at all times by soldiers of the New Species. There was also the chance that the humans working in the factories would try to engineer an infectious agent that would be toxic to the New Species and not humans, thus killing off the species. The New Species would only let mankind work in certain situations. They allowed them to manufacture the cars, the computers, the phones, the food etc. But they would not let them work in the laboratories at all.

With the new economic plan in place, a calmness swept over mother Earth. The New Species unlike humans did not fight or engage in warfare with each other. They were friendly regardless of whether they were from Russia or the United States. With the defeat of mankind came the loss of lines on the map. There were no countries or cultures anymore. There was only the New Species living on Earth, along with the imprisoned humans. Animals, those that were non-human found a new lease of life in this order. They were no longer slaughtered by the New Species. In fact, they were given special protection by their new owners, so much that to kill an animal would result in death. There was no need for doctors or police or lawyers in this brave new world. The New Species had been engineered to be immune to diseases be they cancer or diabetes or heart disease. Furthermore, they all were moral. They all kept within the law. They came to see themselves as custodians of the planet, a planet which man had nearly destroyed through his greedy economic system.

It was an anxious free world for the New Species. They were addicted to nothing except their own existence. They did not need the marriage or the image to appreciate themselves. They recognised just how fortunate they were to be alive. Love was classified as a mental illness by the New Species. Those rare individuals of the New Species who were born with a libido were locked away in special hospitals and prevented from exposing themselves to the world. Love was considered an evil. It was an addiction that had consumed man and the New Species were afraid that it would consume their members too. It was banned by the powers that be. Religion too was outlawed by the New Species. It was considered an evil that caused friction between members of the same species. Also, they just didn't believe that there was such a thing as god. As far as they were concerned, man had created them and not a divine power in the skies.

The New Species not content with owning planet Earth, set about colonizing the moon, mars and the moons of Saturn. They were particularly interested in traversing the gulf of the universe and taking it over no matter how big. But in order to do that they had to improve the physics and mathematics that humans had invented. This would take years if not decades of work if they were to succeed, if in fact they did. They had to find a means to create wormholes and then develop a means to allow them to travel through the wormhole safely. Further to this, to arrest the threat of global warming they were intent on harnessing the power of the fusion of the hydrogen atom which in turn would release so much energy. They looked at the oceans and saw a plentiful supply of energy that could fuel their quest to conquer the universe.

We now turn to my own story. I am a member of human kind and not the New Species. I was born and raised in New York. Prior to the dawn of the New Species I worked as an accountant. I lived a very good life. With the arrival of the New Species, my life was changed forever, as was every human's. We saw the destruction in East Asia and Russia and we were reassured that we would be protected in America. Even when Europe fell, we still thought that no one could touch our country. But slowly the angst grew, particularly when we found out that the New Species were building up forces on the Russian side of the Bering Strait. We were on edge then and prepared for an invasion. But despite this threat we had faith in our government. America was a military super power that could take on anyone or anything. A ceasefire was then agreed and we believed that this would bring peace. It did, but only for a while. Whilst the rhetoric from the New Species was that they were prepared to allow us to govern the

Americas, deep down we knew that they had ill intentions towards us. Then the news of the archipelago of gulag working camps reached us and we felt so sickened that so many human beings were suffering like this. But still we did nothing for one wrong move would have rekindled the war again, something we didn't want.

Life soldiered on for years. We were all living in a state of alert. We didn't know who was human and who was New Species. A culture of paranoia radiated through the landscape. No one could trust anyone. Everyone was an enemy. Deaths in America through guns went through the roof. People thought that such and such a person was a New Species. The government tried to instil calm at all times. They reassured people that the New Species had not infected American soil and that they never would. But it was all political rhetoric designed to control society so that they wouldn't take up arms and begin a revolution. The military continued to patrol the infected areas of the planet. This cleansing of society kept us safe for a while and life returned to a degree of normality. But it only delayed the inevitable, which was a victory for the New Species. Eventually they took over all of the world and enacted a violent reign of terror on any humans still alive.

Henry and I managed to flee the carnage of the New Species. We ran to the countryside, never looking back. The cities were laden with corpses. Decayed and rotten. Many of us stared at the stars thinking this would be our last time to see them. Why couldn't we all just get along I used think to myself. Why couldn't we see the universe and realize how privileged we were to exist in it? It seemed war and vengeance had blinded our souls to who and where we were. We were no longer animals inhabiting an awesome planet. We had been too greedy. We had lost our aim and had given birth to a species more intelligent than ourselves. Our quest for economic growth and prosperity had savaged us and now we hung on for the sake of mankind.

The defining question for humans was whether it was better to be free or to be in chains. Those who were free and wandering the plains were starving and wouldn't survive for very long, unless they found a supply of food which was a rarity. Those who were captured and sent to the camps were fed and looked after until they were led to the slaughter and brutally tortured. This is the choice so many had to make. I felt at the time that I would rather spend my remaining few days with Henry than be deprived of him. We walked the land and he stayed by my side as would any loyal dog. But I knew in my heart a time would

come when I would be forced to kill him. I was just hoping that wouldn't be any time soon. It would break my heart to see him have to stalk the land by himself. He's not the smartest or finesse of dogs. He needs his master to look after him. He wouldn't survive too long on his own and I was conscious of this fact. But still despite the cold nights he slept by my side. In this forsaken land he is my best friend; my only friend. Where I go, he goes. I can see that he is hungry and I try to share my food with him.

Henry is a pure-bred English Cocker Spaniel. I can safely say that he changed my life when we got him. Prior to his arrival I was a lonely man. When Henry or Bubba Henry as I called him, first set foot in my house I fell in love with him. Typical of the breed he has long ears that wobble around his face as he moves. His tail is always wagging when he is around you. Henry just wanted to be loved and that is all he asks for. That he has someone to look after him because on his own he could not look after himself. He was fond of his food alright. He could eat all day and never be full and I had to be careful just how much I fed him. The other thing he loved was going for walks. Henry was unique in that you didn't walk Henry; Henry walked you. He would love smelling all the sign posts and lamp posts. A walk that would normally take ten minutes turned into thirty minutes because he would be stopping to smell everything. Henry was four years old when I adopted him off the SPCA. He was neglected as a dog and that is why he was in the SPCA. His previous owner had not fed him or looked after him. There were maggots in his ears when he was rescued. Despite all his pain and hardship, he never shows it. He never wallows in self-pity. He tries to enjoy himself as much as he can.

He was shy at first. He had to get used to his new owner. The cats didn't know what to think of him. They had never encountered a dog before and were reluctant to approach him. But Henry is not an aggressive dog. He does not get into fights and he just ignored the cats and eventually they managed to all get along together. Eventually I won him over and he began to trust me. When I got up in the morning he would come over to greet me. He always wanted love and attention. He used get a bit jealous when other dogs got attention he felt was his. But he never lashed out at them. He generally ignored other dogs and gave all his energy towards humans. He had problems all his life with his ears such is the breed. The air doesn't circulate inside his ears and this leads to infections that would hurt him. But I used clean out his ears every day to prevent this from

happening. Overall, he is my best friend and the best thing that happened to me. I was lost before I got Bubba Henry.

But how the times had changed. I was an innocent man working away and happy with my life. I would give Henry in to the dog minder every morning and go about my day. Now we are homeless and facing an impending death no matter what we do. I had to be careful. If other humans saw Henry with me they would try to kill him and eat him given how starving they are. There were stories of humans turning into cannibals in order to quell the intense hunger. I had to avoid two types of foe: The New Species and my fellow human beings. Any animals that were discovered were slaughtered for food be they cattle, dogs or wolves. The hunger was getting to me but I refused to sacrifice my best friend to fuel myself. If the roles were reversed would Henry do it to me? I doubt it.

So we soldiered on knowing that our time was coming to an end. I could, depending on whether I found supplies only live for a matter of months. I simply could not keep this nomadic life of fear going. What would become of Henry? I couldn't leave him to his own devices. He would not be able to take care of himself. My plan was to kill him when the time came. If I didn't do that he would either be captured by humans who would kill him or he would starve to death. Would the New Species take care of him if they found him? I don't know. They might, but then again they might not. The last thing I would want is for Bubba Henry, my friend, to starve to death and suffer such a painful end. That is why I may have to kill him. I am saving him. It breaks my heart to even consider such a solution but I don't want to see him suffer. He's my best friend, my only friend in this forsaken world. I wish it could all work out. That I could return to my previous life and all would be well. That Henry was lying asleep in his bed, snoring away, content with life. But that will never happen. If I was caught by the New Species I would be tortured slowly and what would become of Bubba Henry then? He was my will to continue. If he weren't by my side I would have committed suicide a long time ago. He made me want to live and that is the best thing I can say about him.

Henry's Story

The rebellion was organized for a clear night. This way those who managed to escape the abattoir would not have to contend with the rain. On the other hand it meant that it would be cold for those who managed to free themselves. Henry and Levi had managed to convince the other dogs in their cage to rebel. There were at least twenty of them. They were motivated to find their freedom and return to their previous life. Between this and the certain death that awaited them they had no other choice but to try and flee and perhaps be killed in doing so. The dogs were of various breeds. From Terriers to larger dogs such as a German Shepherd. They were weak and tired from the lack of food and water. But they livened themselves up for this one last battle. Many of them knew that they were doomed either way. They could escape and die of starvation or they could lay where they were and be butchered. But nonetheless to give up so easy was a travesty. It was to die without a fight as if life was supposed to turn around and validate you. These poor dogs realized that god or whoever wasn't going to change their plight. They themselves had to earn it.

The plan was set in action. When the human came to prize away an unfortunate dog, he would be set upon by a pack of angry canines. Then they would render him incapable through vicious bites. The plan then was to move on in a pack towards the exit. Any men who stood in their way would be attacked whether they were friend or enemy. No chances were to be taken. The collateral damage was that some dogs would lose their lives or some would be too weak to go any further. Nonetheless they would be remembered for their bravery to the cause. They would remain as a pack until they were outside the enclosure and free. Then they would disperse into the cities and countryside of China. From thereon in it was up to each individual dog to make the most of their freedom. Many recognised that they wouldn't get too far. They saw that they would die of starvation or they would be beaten by humans or they would be attacked by another wild animal. Some stayed together and decided that there was strength in numbers. But the more dogs in a group meant that there was a greater risk of being spotted by cruel humans.

So they broke out of the jail and sought their freedom. Of the twenty or so dogs that were part of the rebellion only six or seven made it passed the gates. The others stumbled near the finish line and were captured and beaten with iron clubs. Levi watched as Henry made his escape. They had stayed together the whole time. Levi had sacrificed himself so that Henry could free himself and

live to fight another day. “Run Henry, run,” he said quietly as the Chinese guards clubbed him over the head with an iron bar. The last thing he saw was Henry making his escape.

Henry ran whichever way he could. Being a Cocker Spaniel, he wasn’t the quickest. But he had a brain and he made good use of it. He wasn’t like a Husky or a Doberman who had stamina and speed to burn. So he had to be careful. To add to that his long ears rendered him partially deaf and his eyes were not the best as well. But he had a great sense of smell that he could use to forage for scraps of food and that was what was on his mind now, for he hadn’t eaten in days. He motored along the paths of Yulin. He wasn’t sure where he was going. He was just delighted that he now finally had his freedom. It was a cold night and he could feel it on his paws. Maybe he could find some place warm to sleep and go about his journey tomorrow. Or maybe it was better to move in the dark when everyone was asleep. He was cautious about people now even though he had come from a loving home. He felt that any human could be a menace that could throw him back into the abattoir. He had to avoid people if necessary and hope that he would find his previous owners who showed compassion to him. But what he didn’t realize is that his previous owners were hundreds of miles away and that they had moved on and purchased a new dog to replace Henry. Such was the way dogs were viewed in this land, they were forgotten about easily.

He wandered into a city dump and scavenged for scraps of food. Luckily his sense of smell was better than most dogs and he could detect the faint whispers of food that were buried deep in the rubbish pile. He managed to find some rice which he ate quickly and with pleasure. He would continue looking for food. He wasn’t sure what to do with himself. Should he remain in the dump overnight or should he keep going on. It was such a dangerous world for Henry given his predicament. He was a stray dog wandering the streets of a city that ate dogs for a living. If anyone caught him they would more than likely view him as food rather than as a pet. He decided to remain in the dump overnight. He found a nice place to sleep and rested himself after his exertion. He wondered whether there were any other dogs in the dump. If there wasn’t that would be a bad sign for it meant that the humans would hunt any dogs that were found. He relaxed under the cold night sky with the stars out. He wondered, even in his dire situation, how fortunate he was to be alive in this world. Even though the odds

were against him, he still tried to see the positives. He shivered under the stars trying to formulate some heat to keep him warm.

The next morning, he woke up to the sound of machinery being used. The humans were operating diggers in the dump. It was time to get away he thought. He didn't know how they would respond if they saw him. He sneaked out without them realizing. He was still hungry and cold but managed to soldier on. He wandered the streets by himself. How he yearned to have Levi next to him to keep him company. He felt all alone in this universe. All he wanted was to be loved by a human. All he wanted was a place he could call his home. All he wanted was to be fed by a compassionate master. Yet he couldn't find this dream in this world. The humans he walked by gave him stern looks. They saw him as vermin spreading rabies and soiling the paths. He knew his time was limited but what could he do. It was better to fight rather than to just give in. He tried to approach some humans, hoping they would be sympathetic to his cause but he got rejected each time. On one occasion he got hit across the head and he fled in fear. This was the life of many a dog. They had been artificially bred by humans to be a certain way. But because of this artificial manipulation they were unable to survive on their own. They did not possess the stealth of the cat; the stamina of the fox; the wings of a bird. They were useless in the wild and needed a human master to provide for them. But in Yulin, compassionate human masters were seldom found. This was a city that held a dog meat eating festival every year, in which they slaughtered thousands of dogs in inhumane methods to celebrate the dominance of mankind on this planet. Henry still had hope but it was a fool's hope. But he wouldn't give in. He was resilient.

He contemplated his life before he was abducted. He had such a good life then. He was showered in love by his masters. They fed him twice a day and took him for long walks. He would get petted and taught tricks. He was the centre of attention within his family. In fact, they considered him more than a dog. He was like a brother to this family of parents and two children. Then at night time when it was colder they would put a blanket over him to keep him warm, and he would snore away the whole night and there was not a bother on him. They would bring him on trips around China. They were inseparable. Where ever they went, Bubba Henry went with them. They even took photos of him and had them framed. He was considered one of the family and not just a dog. How times had changed. Now he was skinny, cold and starving. If only he hadn't wandered out that day by himself he would still be loved by his masters. If only

he had been a little bit smarter. Now he was condemned for he didn't know where his home was and even if he did he would have to walk for hundreds of miles to reach it.

He thought it would be better to get off the streets. He couldn't trust any of the people. They would either send him back to the factory or they would beat him on the spot. Although there were many who loved them, there were equally as many who despised them. He felt he was in the wrong part of the country. Northern China was more appreciative of them. The southern parts abused dogs daily. They had no sympathy to the plight of the starved dogs. He wondered how the other escaped dogs were doing? Did they make it far or were they suffering? He couldn't but help think that many of them were worse off now than they were in the abattoir. Now they would have to contend with days and days of malnutrition and hunger. Eventually they would just collapse and die.

He wandered towards the edge of the city and into the forests. People kept staring at him as if he was a ghost. He saw the worst in them as did they in him. He eventually found the entrance to a forest. He thought it would be better to lay low here. He didn't want to go too far in because he would become lost, but he had to hide away from the scornful eyes of the public. He sat and lay down and pondered why humans saw it fit to treat animals as such. He rested and looked at the trees and wondered what would happen now. If only he could find a new master. Someone who would love him and that is all he wanted, to be loved. But he knew he wouldn't. All he could do was try to forage for food and remain alive as long as possible. But he was fighting a losing battle. He was an animal that man had crafted that could not survive the hostile streets. He was an animal that was dependent on humans for survival. He thought of his old life and how good it was and he was grateful for such love. He thought of his old family. They loved him unconditionally and they would be worried for him now. If only they could come and rescue him. He sat there for ages, hungry and cold. What could he do now? This was the end he thought. This is where the life of Bubba Henry drew to a close. He could not do anything other than greet his fate. If he ventured into the city he would be captured again and slaughtered. If he stayed in the forest he would slowly starve to death. All he could do was sit it out like the millions of other dogs that suffered daily. He yearned for God to intervene but he was ignored. He yearned for his old life but he was ignored. All he could do now was stare into the trees and think about how good he used to have it.

The End